The Masque of Mary

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THE MASQUE OF MARY,

AND OTHER POEMS.

By EDWARD CASWALL

OF THE ORATORY, BIRMINGHAM; AUTHOR OF "LYRA CATHOLICA," ETC.

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TO

B. WILSON, ESQ.

THE FAITHFUL FRIEND

OF MY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE LIFE,

AND ONE OF THOSE MANY

TO WHOM

IN THESE DAYS

IT HAS BEEN GIVEN BY A LOVING SAVIOUR,

IN SUBMITTING TO THE CHURCH,

NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN HIM

BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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ANTE THORUM HUJUS VIRGINIS FREQUENTATE
NOBIS DULCIA CANTICA DRAMATIS.

Roman Breviary.

A

MASQUE OF ANGELS

BEFORE OUR LADY IN THE TEMPLE.

An open Court in the TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM *surrounded by cloisters of white marble. In the centre a fountain playing. On the left, leaning against a pillar, the* BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, *as a child, fast asleep; and at her side vases containing rose-trees in bloom, and delicate aromatic plants.* ANGELS *around keeping watch. Dawn slowly breaks. Distant chant of Priests.*

ITHURIEL.

(*Chief of the Angelic Guard.*)

Comrades, our sacred charge,
Who all night long upon this marble pavement,
Like a pale lily bent, was pouring forth
Her most ambrosial sighs into the ear
Of her eternal Father,—now at length
Has yielded up her eyelids to repose.
Morning returns emblazoning with gold
Yon eastern pinnacle. The hideous storm,

Rais'd by the vagrant spirits of the night,
Which seem'd to shake this temple to its base,
Is past—no cloud appears;
And through the spicy air softly diffus'd
A halcyon calm is basking, as becomes
This day of our young Queen's NATIVITY,
The seventh in its order since she came
Immaculate into a world defil'd.
A DAY it is well worthy of observance
Now as in after-time; and our custom
Has been to celebrate it hitherto
With song and festal show, in entertainment
Of this dear Maid. Now, therefore, Azael,
Most bright deviser of our pageantries,
Say, what new mystery hast thou prepar'd
For this auspicious morn, which thrills the world
With life, and joy, and glad expectancy?
Last year thine art was most felicitous,
Bringing before our eyes, as I remember,
The happy pastoral times; and setting forth,
With infinite delight to this fair soul,
As in a drama, Abraham's sacrifice
Of Isaac on the holy Mount of Vision,
Timely averted by an angel's hand.

AZAEL.

Dread Lord, our mystery of to-day attempts
(After the manner of the sacred masques

Play'd by the youth of modern Israel)
To represent, by aid of a Procession,
The glories of this heaven-created Child;
Personifying the early Patriarchs,
As we remember each, in face and garb,
While journeying on his earthly pilgrimage,
Now in the groves of Paradise at rest.
These, as they pass, in turn will homage pay
To this new blossom of their ancient tree;
Felicitating in triumphant strains
The birthday morn of Her, in whom alone
The hope of poor mortality is hid.
All was prepar'd, and we were busy choosing
Last night our parts, when of a sudden leapt
The tempest down, and summon'd us away
To the defence of this all-sacred head,
From the satanic crew that strove so hard
To sweep into the bottomless abyss
Our Temple and its Treasure.

ITHURIEL.

It was well.
First among all our duties was enjoin'd us,
By Michael the Archangel, our high Prince,
Ever by day and night, with heedful watch
To guard this paragon of innocence
From her innumerable relentless foes,
Headed by false apostate Lucifer.
This task ye well perform'd, Angelic Powers:

I mark'd each several deed of noble daring,
While Hell in vain before your serried front
Its nether depth upheav'd. Now, therefore, go,
Ye who this entertainment have in charge,
And what remains complete with diligence;
For I expect some princely visitors
With the first slanting sunbeam, in high state,
Coming from bright Italia, to salute
The Queen of Sion, and perchance to stay
As your spectators. We, who here remain,
Will sing meanwhile in this fair sleeper's ear
Our birthday song of gratulation,
Blending and parting in alternate strains.

[*Exeunt* Azael *and Companions.*

ANGELS' BIRTHDAY SONG TO MARY.

Hail to the Flower of grace divine!
Hail to the Heir of David's line!
Hail to the world's great Heroine!

Hail to the Virgin pre-elect!
Hail to the Work without defect
Of the supernal Architect!

Hail to the Maid ordain'd of old,
Deep in eternities untold,
Ere the blue waves of ocean roll'd!

Ere the perennial founts had sprung;
Ere in ether the globe was hung;
Ere the morning stars had sung!

Welcome the beatific morn
When the Mother of Life was born,
Only hope of a world forlorn!

What a thrill of ecstatic mirth
Danc'd along through Heav'n and Earth,
At the tidings of Mary's birth!

How was Hell to its centre stirr'd!
How sang Hades when it heard
Of her coming so long deferr'd!

Happy, happy, the Angel band,
Chosen by Mary's side to stand
As her defence on either hand!

Safe beneath our viewless wings,
Mother elect of the King of kings,
Fear no harm from hurtful things!

What though Eden vanish'd be,
More than Eden we find in thee!
Thou, our joy and jubilee!

Enter Herald, *with a banner inscribed* Roma *and surmounted by a golden eagle.*

HERALD.

Most mighty Prince!
Foremost among the Chivalry of Heaven!
Know that the Angels of Italia,
With their high Potentate, the Guardian
Of world-subjecting Rome, mov'd by report

Of Palestine's new wonder, have arriv'd ;
And crave permission of thee to behold
The world's young joy.

ITHURIEL.

They are most welcome here.

Enter, in glistering apparel, the Tutelary Angels *of* Rome *and other Italian Cities.*

TUTELARY ANGEL OF ROME (*kneeling to Mary*).

Hail, thou, of love and fear and holy hope
Mother that art to be! Hail, Woman blest
Above all women! Mightier than all
Before or after thee! Effulgent Mirror
Wholly untouch'd by breath of primal sin!
Brightness of light eternal! within whom
Nothing defil'd hath place. All beautiful!
Lovelier than Cherubim or Seraphim!
Surpassing all th' Angelic Hierarchies!
Temple and throne of blazing Deity!
Praise, lustre, excellence, of humankind!
Through whom celestial dovelike peace returns
To the long-ruffled and disorder'd world!
Who shalt on earth ineffably conceive
The Lord of Heav'n. Hail, living Fount of Life!
From whom the Maker of the Universe,
The Father's consubstantial Word and Son,
Shall into His eternal Person take
Perfect humanity, thenceforth to be

Inseparably His for evermore ;
So with a new regenerated race
To fill our vacant thrones ! Virgin august !
As yet amid celestial sovereignties
Only by dim anticipation known,
But now, in thy predestinated time,
Beginning partially to be reveal'd !

[*Laying his crown at her feet.*

Never again since I have Mary seen
Shall glitter on this humbled brow of mine
Great Rome's imperial diadem ; hers it is,
And mine by right no more. Accept it then,
Empress elect of universal worlds !
Unworthy to adorn thy sacred head,
Hardly deserving at thy feet a place.

ITHURIEL.

Most noble Potentate, in the behalf
Of this fair Daughter of Jerusalem
And Queen of holy Sion, we accept
Your loving worship ; and the time shall be
When Mary to your Rome a hundredfold
This homage shall repay ; if but aright
I read the course of ages faintly streak'd
In prophecy, or by conjecture weigh'd.
And now, in token of our grateful love,
I bid you to a Pageant, each and all,
Prepar'd amongst us in a simple fashion
For the diversion of this royal Child.

Which, presently commencing, will give space
For your return ere night her sable wing
Expand upon the Adriatic wave.

ANGEL OF ROME.

We count ourselves most fortunate; already
Fame of your Mysteries hath reached our ear.

AZAEL (*re-entering*).

All is complete, my Prince: we do but wait
For your commands.

ITHURIEL.

Begin then, Azael;
While in their chalices are sparkling yet
The dewdrops of the morn.

AZAEL.

Please you that we
Awake our Lady first?

ITHURIEL.

Nay, as I think,
Better she slumber on; for much she needs,
After the rabid uproar of last night,
Some genial balm. Nor will your Spectacle
Less clearly pass before her inward gaze,
Than if those eyelids with their golden fringe
Had been unlock'd; finding an easy entrance,
Beneath the semblance of a mystic dream,
In that exact proportion best befitting
Her present grace and knowledge. Such the power
That to angelic ministries belongs.

[*Exit* Azael. *The rest arrange themselves for the spectacle.*

THE MASQUE.

Enter, personated by Angels, the High-Priest *and* Priests *of the Temple, with censers and silver trumpets, on one side; and* Virgins *of the* Sanctuary, *with harps and tabrets, on the other. Before taking their place, they advance towards* Our Lady *and make solemn obeisance.*

HIGH-PRIEST.

Daughter of Joachim and Anna blest!
Of David's race the loveliest and the best!
Scion of Jesse, in whose stem entwine
The sacerdotal and the regal line;
In whom, with ever-new delight, we trace
New miracles of still increasing grace;—
Accept the homage that we come to pay
On the bright morning of thy natal day.

O, how can we enough record
Our grateful thanks to Israel's Lord!
For sending us, in this the hour
Of Juda's fast-departing power,
Of Juda's crime, and Juda's shame,
This Treasure of immortal fame!
This earnest of the Father's love!
This pure and spotless Turtle-dove!

This Paradisal prodigy!
This Flower of immortality!
Not without cause, O Virgin pre-elect,
Do we from thee auspicious days expect;
Remembering how from Anna's barren womb,
Child of a vow, thou didst divinely come;
How all the gifts of reason, virtue, grace,
In thee, from thy Conception, found a place;—
How, hither of thine own accord
Thou camest with thy parents dear
To be presented to the Lord,
And dwell with Him in secret here,
While yet, O mystery divine!
Only three short years were thine!
Nor camest thou by Angels unattended;—
Myself beheld their guardian wings,
O, sacred Heir of Juda's kings!
High above thy radiant head
A circumambient glory spread,
In mystic rays of pearl and azure blended!

Now, therefore, from prophetic signs most clear
Knowing that soon Messias must appear;
And having watch'd from day to day
Thy soul its hidden wealth display,
As from some unfathom'd mine
Full of treasures all divine;—
Marking thy life of ceaseless prayer and praise;—
Marking thy various superhuman ways;—

Marking thy most august humility,
That nothing worthy in itself can see;—
We judge that thou must be
None other but that Virgin, long foretold
By word, and type, and mysteries manifold,—
That Virgin promised at Creation's morn,
As her of whom Messias should be born;
Whose foot should crush the Serpent's head,
And down in dust the pride of raging Satan tread!

Hail, then, O Israel's joy! Hail, Orient Gate!
Through which the everlasting Increate,—
The Infinite Almighty King of kings,—
Shall enter on the stage of finite things.
Hail, Stair of light!
That burst on Jacob's sight,
Spangling the gloomy vault of ebon night!
What time, an exile flying,
He rested, on his stony pillow lying!
Stair of crystalline glass:
Along whose sacred flights, that tier by tier
Scale Heaven's etherial sphere,
Angels ascending and descending pass!—
To whose firm base the earth a floor supplies,
Whose azure heights are lost beyond the skies!—
Hail, thou, whose faith to Israel shall restore
More than the glory that was hers of yore;
From whose most sacred and imperial womb
The great High Priest in majesty shall come,

Chosen for ever, as the Psalmist spake,
After the order of Melchisedech!

[*Taking a thurible, he solemnly incenses* Our Lady *as she lies asleep; after which* Priests *and* Virgins *arrange themselves in Choir on either side of the Court.*

SCENE I.

The fountain ceases to play; and the Cloister at the end of the Court slowly parting, exhibits, as on a stage, a melancholy prospect of rock and desert, veiled in mysterious gloom.

Enter Eve, *personated by an angel, in a raiment of many colours, gracefully wrought of delicate furs and plumage.*

EVE.

Adam, where art thou? O return, return.
Too long hast thou been absent from my side
Searching the wild for fruits so scanty here,
So plentiful in Eden's happy clime!
Adam, where art thou? Ah, in vain I call;
No voice responds; and o'er the hideous waste
Chaotic silence broods; save when a blast
Far pealing from the stormy clarions
Of sworded Cherubim, from earth to heav'n
Reverberates our doom. O misery!
O misery of miseries,—to think,
But yesterday in Paradise; and now
Outcasts of nature, to the wrath expos'd
Of all creation by our Fall aggriev'd!

Nor less of furious demons raging round,
Unchain'd by our own act. But worse than all,
Far worse than outward elemental wrack,
Far worse than brutal or Satanic rage,
Is this conflicting storm I feel within;
Deep in my central being, such as never
I felt before in Paradisal days.
O loss supreme! O loss unutterable
Of grace divine, our Maker's noblest boon
To nature superadded! This departed,
I feel a very ruin of myself;
A strife of inward spiritual elements,
Each furiously against the other turn'd,
And wrestling in the darken'd soul's abyss.
Ah, wilful and perverse! who, not content
With that unmerited beatitude
So freely by creative love bestow'd,
Ambitiously must lend an eager ear
To the deceiving Serpent; and partake
Of the forbidden tree; and break the law
My Maker gave me; and prevail with Adam
To break it also; and had no touch of pity
For generations to be born of me,
Who through perpetual ages shall proclaim
Their Mother curs'd among all womankind,
Partakers of her guilt and penalty.

[*Casting herself on the sand.*

O parent earth, receive me! Dust I am,
And into dust I must again return;

So runs the sentence. O, that here it might
Find its fulfilment—happier far to die
Now in Creation's morning, than live on
To be a fount of countless miseries
To countless beings through all future time!
So might the Lord another Eve create,
Another Eve far better than the first,
Far better and more wise; who should not sin
As the first sinn'd. So might the Lord from her
Ordain another race of humankind,
Not to be born in sin, as must be born
All who are born of me. Ah, what if this
Which now I feel,—this faintness creeping o'er me,—
Ah, what if this be death! O Adam, Adam!
Haste to thy dying spouse; make haste to speak
Forgiveness of the past, and to enfold
Thy partner in a last embrace of love.

[*She sinks in a swoon. Solemn silence. Presently a soft Eolian melancholy music springs up, mingled with the distant moaning of wild-beasts, plaintive notes of birds, the sighing of winds, and other doleful sounds. After which Voices overhead, as in a colloquy.*

FIRST VOICE.

Hark, how all creation moans
In a thousand piteous tones,
Wailing its untimely fall
From a state celestial!
See for sylvan lawns appear
Arid wastes of desert drear!

See the world a ruin lie,
All through Eve's apostasy!

SECOND VOICE.

Lord, how long shall be the time
Ere the guilt of Adam's crime
Shall from nature be remov'd
In the smile of Thy Belov'd?
When shall justice dawn again?
When shall peace eternal reign?
When again on earth shall be
Truth and true felicity?

THIRD VOICE.

When his weakness man has shown
In his native strength alone;
When the world is worn and old;
When its faith is dead and cold;
When o'er sacred Carmel's head
Forty centuries have sped;
When a Virgin shall be born,
Like the rose without a thorn,
Wholly free from Adam's stain;—
Then shall justice dawn again;
Then again the waste shall bloom
As a lily from the tomb;
Heav'n re-open in the skies,
Earth renew its Paradise.

[Eve *slowly wakes; and gazing round with terror, sobs vehemently.*

Enter the Archangel Gabriel, *bearing an olive-branch and some fruits of the desert.*

GABRIEL.

Hail, Mother of all ages! fontal source
Of humankind, who shall from thee become
A multitudinous river, surging on,
In ever-widening and majestic flood,
Into the ocean of eternity!
Weep not, O Eve!—I come to comfort thee.
In proof of which, behold this olive-branch,
Earnest of peace restor'd, and brighter days.
Know that, among all miseries, despair
Closing the gate of mercy, is the worst.
Rise, then, and be consol'd; and eat of what
I bring thee. Little yet suspectest thou
How much thy natural frame has been impair'd—
Immortal once by grace, and with the help
Of life's immortal tree; but now, alas,
As left in its own native feebleness,
By slightest effort wearied; and throughout
Corruptible with latent germs of death.
These fruits, less beautiful, indeed, than those
Of Paradise, are yet, so mercy wills,
Best suited to repair thy wasted strength.

[*He offers her fruit.*

EVE (*rising*).

O thou, whose form,
So radiantly bright, proclaims thee one

Of Heav'n's high Princes, I would eat, but grief
Forbids me,—grief, and keen solicitude
For absent Adam. At the break of dawn
He wander'd forth, leaving me strict command
Not to forsake the circuit of these rocks;
And now the evening shades are closing round
Without a sign of his desired return.
What if some beast have rent his tender flesh!
Or on his head the vivid thunderbolt
Have fallen unawares! or, sadder still,
What if in strong aversion he has left
His guilty Eve; and sought him out a nook
In some far region, there to pine and die
Safe from her hateful sight! Say, holy Angel,
If haply you have chanc'd to cross his path
Upon the borders of th' inclement waste?
For I am troubled at his lengthen'd stay.

GABRIEL.

But now I came upon him, as he sate,
His hands upon his forehead tightly clasp'd,
Beneath a solitary juniper,
On a high sandy hillock, gazing far
Across the plain in meditative mood,
And breathing forth his lamentable sighs
Upon th' unsympathising desert wild,
In fond remembrance of lost Paradise.
Some comfort, as I think, I minister'd,
Bearer of welcome news; and have the same

For thee, when thou hast tasted of the fruit
He sends by me,—his poor love-offering,
Cull'd with laborious and painful search
From the rude bosom of the wilderness,
Not without wounds from many a prickly thorn.
Himself had come, but that his jaded limbs
Refus'd their task.

EVE (*eating of the fruit*).

Thanks, happy messenger, for those dear words
That tell me Adam lives, and still can love
The guilty origin of all his ills.
And thanks again to Adam and to thee
For this repast, too good for fallen Eve.
Already, with no small surprise I feel
In body as in mind my strength reviv'd.
And now, declare, I pray, what consolation
Is this thou bringest? How can comfort be,
Where all is gloom and blank despondency?

GABRIEL.

And can it be, then, Eve, thou hast forgotten
That promise most august, so lately made thee
By thy all-pitying Maker, that "the Woman
Should crush the Serpent's head?"—I fear thou hast;
Or whence this hopelessness?—Now, therefore, list
To what I here announce. Far distant hence,
Behind yon red horizon where the sun
Is dipping low, there stands a holy Hill,

Bas'd on the summit of the mountain-tops,
Which men hereafter shall Moria call,
Or "Mount of Vision;" now with cedars crown'd,
Encircling with their fragrant depth of shade
A verdant meadow, but in times to come
To be surmounted by a glorious Temple,
Of Sion nam'd. For there hath God decreed
To set His habitation; there hath fix'd
His everlasting love, and firm impress'd
The sacred stamp of His Almighty Name.

To this most holy and majestic Mount,
Know, Eve, that I, in pity of the grief
That weighs thy soul, have been enjoin'd to bring thee;
And there, in mystic vision, to disclose,—
What shall console thee much,—the lovely sight
Of that eternally predestin'd Maid
Reserv'd to spring from thee in after-days,
Immaculate in Conception as in Birth,
Whose Seed shall be the Saviour of thy race,
Uniting in one Person, all divine,
Two natures unconfus'd, divine and human,
For evermore. There also shalt thou see
(As in the mirror of th' Eternal Mind,
Which simultaneous with all the times,
At once in present, past, and future, lives)
In glorious procession sweep along
Before thy dazzled gaze, Saints upon Saints,—
The Patriarchs of the world,—their homage paying

To their and thy fair Daughter, whom on earth
They antedate, coeval in the skies,
The veritable offspring of thy womb,
For ever bless'd among all womankind;
And seeing shalt rejoice.

EVE.

O happiness!
Kind Angel, let us go without delay.
Lead on; I follow thee.

GABRIEL.

To Adam first
We bend our steps; he also is permitted
To see this blissful sight, that so your joy
United may be greater. Yet, O Eve,
When of these visionary scenes ye drink,
Deem not that ye behold the things themselves,
Or aught beside a semblance, imag'd forth,
With help of gross aerial elements
By angel ministries, beneath the veil
Of outward shapes; as suits your fallen state,
Whose now beclouded soul, enslav'd to earth
By her own fatal and rebellious choice,
Her heavenly intuitions half-obscur'd,
Henceforth, so long as she inhabits flesh,
Must be content by earthly images
To picture to her gaze immortal things.
Nay Heav'n itself, could it be brought before
Your feeble vision, would perforce assume

The bulky outline of material forms,
Its essence pure escaping human reach.

[*He leads* Eve *across the desert. As they advance, the sandy waste begins to assume a verdant tint, blue sky appears, and a balmy breeze springs up.*

GABRIEL.

See, Eve, already how the wilderness
Is casting off its late funereal garb,
And all in vernal beauty decks itself—
Emblem of hope reviv'd, and happier times.
Onward; the furthest spot to human speed
Is little distant if an Angel lead.

[*Exeunt* Gabriel *and* Eve.

A mist rises at the end of the Court, by way of drop-scene, representing, in a brilliant mirage, the Temple in its first glory, as in the age of Solomon; meanwhile the Priests and Virgins, from their places on either side of the Court, sing alternately in Choir, as follows:

PRIESTS.

On Sion's hill a Temple stands,
No toilsome work of human hands:
A Temple beauteous in design,
Replete with mysteries divine:
A Temple of eternal fame;
And Mary is its mystic name.

VIRGINS.

Or ere the skyey dome was rear'd;
Or ere the mountain-tops appear'd;

Or ere the raging sea was chain'd;—
The Lord this Temple had ordain'd:
And its secure foundations laid
Before the Seraphim were made.

PRIESTS.

Deep in His counsels all divine,
In silence grew the lovely shrine;
In silence rear'd aloft its head,
And like the fragrant cedar spread,
That keeps from age to age its throne
Upon the heights of Lebanon.

VIRGINS.

What in the night of times gone by
Was ever in th' eternal Eye,
Now in the world's reviving morn
Begins on human sight to dawn;
Our hands have touch'd, our eyes behold,
This Temple of pellucid gold.

PRIESTS.

Still with the tide of onward time
Expanding in a growth sublime,
Soon shall its outer courts extend
Throughout the world from end to end,
And gather into one embrace
The Jewish and the Gentile race.

VIRGINS.

Hail, exquisite resplendent shrine
Of the supreme eternal Trine!
Hail, womb incomprehensible,
In which the Father's Word shall dwell!
Hail, Virgin, free from Adam's curse!
Hail, Temple of the universe!

PRIESTS.

Ah, could we but a moment spy,
Thy glorious inner Sanctuary;
What miracles would meet our gaze,
Exceeding all that earth displays!
Such as befit the Palace bright
Preparing for the Infinite.

VIRGINS.

Ah, could we view the altar fair,
That glistens so divinely there;
Could we but scent the incense sweet
That hovers round that mercy-seat;
Could we but hear the lovely song,
Which evermore those courts prolong;—

PRIESTS AND VIRGINS TOGETHER.

Then should we all perforce avow
That Heav'n itself had come below;
In order that the Lord of grace
Might find on earth a fitting place

Whence—in depths of ruin hurl'd—
To reorganise the world!

SCENE II.

The mist dissolving reveals a grassy terrace looking down on a plain; in the midst of which rises Mount Moria.

Enter the Archangel Gabriel, *conducting* Adam *and* Eve.

GABRIEL.

Lo, where it stands; the sacred table-land
And Mount of Vision promised to your gaze!
Behold its fair foundations lifted high
Upon the summits of the holy hills;
Figure of her, whose sanctity begins
Where others terminate. Behold, behold,
The Mount of mounts: Heav'n's sacred vestibule,
Jerusalem's fair seat in future days,
Predestin'd habitation of the Lord,
Where He shall dwell for ages, and well-pleas'd,
Incense and holy sacrifice receive:
Umbrageous now, and in the glory clad
Of late creation; but in after-times,
When o'er the world a roaring flood has swept,
Far different to appear! There shall ye see,
Upon its verdant heaven-embracing floor,
Your Child in glory immarcessible
Sitting enthron'd beneath the mystic shade

Of Life's ambrosial Tree—Mother elect
Of Life and all who live: and there shall view,
Before her with exultant pæans throng,
Gather'd from all the realms of ages past,
The Patriarchal train, of which already
As hitherward we came, ye saw the skirts
Winding along the valley's further side;
And heard its herald-note of victory
Peal from a thousand trumpets with a blast
That shook the realms of chaos and of night.
And now, farewell: henceforth ye need me not,
O fountain-heads august of all mankind!
Sufficient of yourselves to find the way.

[*He vanishes.*

ADAM.

How sudden was his parting! such the gift
Of incorporeal natures. Fare thee well,
Bright Messenger of peace! and bear aloft
To other worlds the tale of Adam's fall,
To be their warning through the tracts of time.
Come, Eve, rejoice with me in this fair scene.
O contrast exquisite,
With that interminable desert waste
Which late we trod! Ah, what an odorous waft
Of Paradisal perfume upward steals
From shrubs innumerous, whose circlet fair
Encompasses as with a flowery belt
The Mount of God. O balm ineffable,
At which mine eyes, that seem'd as adamant,

In blissful tears dissolve! Hail, sacred hill!
Hail, second Eden, fairer than the first!
Be quick, my best beloved; let us descend
Without delay, and mount yon azure flight
Of Heaven-ascending stairs, lest with a breath
The vision melt before our yearning eyes,
And leave us doubly desolate.

EVE.

Bethink thee,
My Adam, with what face can we appear
In that most holy vestibule, disrob'd,
As here we stand, of our first innocence?
Such is the fear that in my bosom thrills.

ADAM.

And rightly, had we no sure confidence
Elsewhere obtain'd. But, O my timorous Eve,
These honourable vestments clothing us,
So delicately wrought in fairest form
And exquisite variety of tint,
Lovely adornments from the loving hand
Of God Himself—what else are they but tokens
Exterior of a new interior grace,
Infus'd within us through the priceless merits
Of Him who is to come? In this array'd,
Though of ourselves most wholly miserable,
We have no cause for shame. Why, then, delay
To follow his command who brought us hither?

EVE.

Adam, thy will is mine. Too much already
Has disobedience cost us. Lead thou on;
My heart is burning with desire to see
The sacred Virgin to be born of me.

[*Exeunt* Adam *and* Eve.

A mist rises at the end of the Court hiding the scene from view as before, and representing, in a brilliant mirage, Rome, as in the age of Augustus.

HYMN

(*sung alternately by the Choir of Priests and Virgins*).

PRIESTS.

Ere yet primeval Chaos reign'd;
Ere matter yet had form obtain'd;
Far in the empyrean height
A vacant Throne of purest light,
Aloft o'er worlds angelic rais'd,
In solitary glory blaz'd.

VIRGINS.

The Seraphs, from the topmost tier
That girdles Heav'n's eternal sphere,
With awe the distant wonder ey'd,
And vainly to interpret tried;
No creature worthy could they see
To sit in such high majesty.

PRIESTS.

But not in vain th' Eternal Mind
Hath its eternal scheme design'd;
Now, therefore, in the midst of years
This Child immaculate appears,
Worthy alone of all to fill
That Throne so inaccessible!

VIRGINS.

Hail, Mary, purest Gem of earth!
Hail, full of grace before thy birth!
Whose path from grace to grace ascends,
And in supremest glory ends.
Hail, Daughter of th' Eternal King,
From whom the Life of life shall spring!

PRIESTS.

O, how for thee the Angels sigh,
Eager to waft thee to the sky!
Too long to them the days appear
That yet detain thee captive here;
Where, quench'd in mist of night below,
Thy rays of glory dimly glow.

VIRGINS.

Ascend, ascend, Imperial Queen!
Forsake this limitary scene;—
Forsake this dark abysmal place
Which guilt and misery deface:

A higher world invites thee on
To splendour and dominion!

PRIESTS AND VIRGINS TOGETHER.

Ascend, ascend, Imperial Queen!
Ascend, and plead the cause of men!
Ascend, and reign upon the Throne
Predestinated thine alone!
Ascend, where none before have trod!
Ascend, the Mother of thy God!

SCENE III.

Summit of the Mount of Vision, *exhibiting a spacious flowery lawn surrounded by cedars. In the midst, the* Tree *of* Life; *beneath which, personated by an angel, appears* MARY, *in a raiment of blue and gold, seated on a throne with steps of pearl, crowned, and sceptre in hand, and as though about thirteen years of age.*

Enter Adam *and* Eve.

EVE (*clasping Mary's feet*).

O most Immaculate Maid,
Virgin ineffable! Pure child of God!
Transcendent marvel of the universe!
Beauty and glory of the human race!
Effacing all the shame of womankind!
See at thy feet poor miserable Eve;
And hear the parents to their daughter sue
For pardon and for peace. O joy of joys!

Felicity unhop'd! to see thy face,
Who shalt repair the ruin that I made;
Else irremediable. By Eva's fall
Came sin, came death, came deathly slavery
To Satan and to sin; but Eva's daughter,
Bridging the cruel gulf her mother made,
Opens to all mankind a second path
To Paradise and life's immortal Tree.
Hail, second Eve, far better than the first!
Hail, Virgin pre-elect! Virgin conceiv'd
In Adam's nature, not in Adam's sin;
That so to all mankind thou mightest be
A new beginning of new life in Him
Who comes through thee for Adam to atone.
Hail, Archetype of all that loveliest is,
Sweetest, most perfect, best, and heav'nliest!
Of whom our Eden but a figure was.
Lily of incorruption! Life in death!
Abyss of grace! remember that from us
Thou didst that elemental substance take
Wherewith thou shalt—O marvel infinite!—
The Incorporeal with corporeal clothe,
And on th' originate Increate bestow
A second nature's origin, so becoming
Mother of God, and Empress of the world!
Remember that to our sad fall thou owest
Thy peerless glory; and with gracious eye
Look down upon thy parents here before thee,

Here as they kneel, most lovely and belov'd:
And stretch thy gentle hand, and wipe away
Their mournful tears; and lift them up again;
And whisper in their hearts eternal peace.

MARY (*kissing Eve on the forehead*).

Hail, Parents dear!
O weep no more, and cease your piteous sighs;
And praise with me the goodness of our God;
His heights unsearchable
Of wisdom and of love;
Who on His lowly handmaid gaz'd;
And her from empty nothing rais'd;
And chose her in His grace to be
Mother of Immortality;
Mother of His eternal Son:
Not for her own sake alone,
But for the sake of you and all mankind;
For whom, in His omniscient mind,
Before the worlds were made, this mercy He design'd.
Who, pitying our first Parents' fall,
And in their fate the fate of all,
The penalty their guilt had earn'd
Hath into greater glory turn'd;
And deign'd to crush the serpent's head
Beneath a feeble maiden's tread.
Now therefore, parents dear,
Lament no more; but, with a joyful heart,

Ascend these steps, and sit beside your child ;
And know that ye are here most opportunely,
To aid her in receiving with due grace
The glad Procession now upon its way ;
Coming, with songs of triumph jubilant,
To offer thanks in Sion this fair morn
In homage of that love, which, in the depth
Of everlasting ages, fix'd on her
Its pitying gaze ; and chose her from the mass
Of old corruption, and predestin'd her,
And called her, in the plenitude of times,
To be the Mother of the Son of God
In whom alone is all redemption found.

[*She embraces our first* Parents ; *and taking them by the hand, makes them sit down on the uppermost step of the throne,* Adam *on her right, and* Eve *on her left.*

A mist rises at the end of the Court as before, representing, in a brilliant mirage, Athens, as in the age of Pericles.

HYMN

(*sung alternately by the Choir of Priests and Virgins*).

PRIESTS.

Hail, thou first-begotten Daughter
Of th' Almighty Father's love ;
Temple of eternal glory,
Pure and spotless Turtle-dove ;
Mistress of the earth and skies,
Choicest flower of Paradise !

VIRGINS.

Hail to her, whose deep foundations
On the holy hills are laid;
Joy of endless generations,
Lov'd before the worlds were made;
Treasure of believing souls
While the wheel of ages rolls!

PRIESTS.

Garden of divinest odours;
Roseate Shell of purest ray,
Where the priceless Pearl of heaven
Waited its appointed day,
Nestling in repose sublime
Down beneath the wave of time!

VIRGINS.

Cloud of supramundane splendour,—
Cloud, that in its awful womb
Bears the Father's hidden lightning,
Bears the thunderbolt of doom;
O'er the world in mighty power
Comes to shed the Spirit's shower!

PRIESTS.

Who can count the starry jewels
Set in Mary's crown of light?
Who can estimate her greatness?
Who can guess her glory's height?

What can measure its extent
Save the depth of God's descent?

VIRGINS.

Hail, O Queen of nature's kingdoms,
Queen of Angels, hail to thee!
Greater none have been before thee,
Greater none shall ever be:
Hail, divine Receptacle
Of th' Incomprehensible!

PRIESTS.

Thee the God of worlds foreseeing
In thy dignity supreme,
Lov'd thee, chose thee, gave thee being,
Set thee in salvation's scheme;
Then with all perfections deck'd,
As His Mother pre-elect.

VIRGINS.

Thine shall be a lot surpassing
All that is of glory known
In the earth or in the heavens,—
Thine, but not for thee alone;
God, in whom thy life began,
Made thee for Himself and man.

PRIESTS.

God and man in thee uniting,
Death in thee by life o'ercome;

Creature with Creator blending,
Man remoulded in thy womb ;—
Such, O peerless Child, shall be
Thy prolific history.

VIRGINS.

Fount of wonders ever flowing !
Glory of the sea and sky !
How for thee th' eternal mansions
Waiting yearn, and yearning sigh !
Envying earth the moments slow
That detain thee here below.

PRIESTS.

Bird of Paradisal beauty,
Silver Dove with wings of gold,
Pity thy dear native Heaven,
And thy fragrant plumes unfold ;
Quickly, quickly, speed thy flight
Up to crystal realms of light.

PRIESTS AND VIRGINS TOGETHER.

There for poor unhappy mortals
Thy immortal Son implore,
There in beatific glory
Reign with him for evermore ;
Through the ages all along
Theme of sempiternal song.

SCENE IV.

Summit of the Mount of Vision as before; Mary on her throne, with Adam and Eve on either side.

Peal of trumpets, and enter first part of the Procession:—little Innocents, *dancing and scattering aromatic blossoms; after whom* Abel, *bearing a lamb in his bosom; then* Seth, Henoch, *with his* Book, Mathusala, *and other antediluvian* Patriarchs, *with long white beards; last of all* Noe, *walking as it were in the midst of a rainbow, and carrying a pattern of the Ark in gold, with a dove upon its roof. On arriving before the throne, the Procession stops.*

HENOCH.

Hail, Desire of the first world!

THE REST.

Hail, Delight of the ages to come!

NOE.

Daughter of prophecy and Virgin true,
Hope of both worlds—the ancient and the new,
Mother of day, and Queen of golden morn,
From whom the sole-begotten Son is born!
Here, lowly bending at thy feet, behold
The Blest who lived before the deluge roll'd;
And see before thee, Olive-branch of grace,
The second Father of the human race.

Ah, why, O Virgin dear,
On earth's terraqueous sphere
So late in time did thy sweet form appear?

Hadst thou but earlier come,
Not then the first-created world
Had been into destruction hurl'd
Beneath a watery doom ;
Thy smile had sooth'd the wrath of God,
And stay'd His dread descending rod.
Hail, Ark of Life !
That, borne unharmed above the surging strife
Of Hell and human crime,
Preservest in thyself that Seed sublime,
The hope of after-time ;
From whence shall come a new creation,
A holy spotless generation,
A race and empire divine,
Children of th' eternal Trine ;
A royal race, with promise sure
Through everlasting ages to endure !
Hail, Rainbow bright,
From the pure Fount of Light
In variegated hues of grace array'd ;
Glistening sublime
Upon the verge of time,
Where spreads eternity its awful shade !

Now, therefore, bend thine ear,
O Daughter fair, and hear,
And grant the favour we entreat,
Queen of Patriarchs, at thy feet ;—

That, since on earth thy face we might not see
While wrapt around in our mortality,
Now, in return for our long sighs,
Beaming down with thy bright eyes,
Thou suffer us to hear that voice
At which the circling spheres rejoice;
Which all the earth with gladness fills,
And through the womb of nature thrills,
Robbing with its delicious strain
E'en Purgatory of its pain.

[Mary *smiles a gracious assent; and giving her sceptre to* Eve, *rises and sings.*

MARY'S SONG.

While I was yet a little one
I pleased the Lord of grace,
And in His holy Sanctuary
He granted me a place.

There, shelter'd by His tender care,
And by His love inspired,
I strove in all things to fulfil
Whatever He desired.

I wholly gave myself to Him,
To be for ever His;
I meditated on His law
And ancient promises.

And oft at my embroidery,
Musing upon the Maid
Of whom Messias should be born,—
Thus in my heart I pray'd :

" Permit me, Lord, one day to see
That Virgin ever dear,
Predestinated in the courts
Of Sion to appear.

O blest estate, if but I might
Among her handmaids be !
But such a favour, O my God,
Is far too high for me."

Thus unto God I pour'd my prayer ;
And He that prayer fulfill'd,
Not as my poverty had hop'd,
But as His bounty will'd.

Erewhile a trembling child of dust,
Now rob'd in heavenly rays,
I reign the Mother of my God
Through sempiternal days.

To me the nations of the world
Their grateful tribute bring ;
To me the Powers of darkness bend ;
To me the Angels sing.

[*The Procession moves on.*

Peal of trumpets, and enter Melchisedech, *gorgeously vested as High Priest and King of* Salem, *bearing a Paten and Chalice of gold; then the* Father *of the* Faithful, *followed by* Isaac, Jacob, *and* Joseph; *then, between* Aaron *and* Mary, Moses, *bearing the two tables of stone; after whom* Josue *and warriors, succeeded by* Ruth *and maidens as gleaners. Last of all* King David *as a shepherd-boy, with a harp in his hand.*

MELCHISEDECH.

Hail, Queen of Salem!

THE REST.

Hail, beatific Vision of peace!

DAVID (*accompanying himself on his harp*).

Daughter of a royal line,
Noble shoot of Jesse's rod,
Flow'r immortal and divine,
First among the works of God!

As I watch'd my flock by night,
Musing over Israel's woes,
Oft of old thy Vision bright,
Child of grace, before me rose.

Lulling nature's angry storm,
Oft I saw with prophet eye
Thy imperial radiant form
On the moonbeam glancing by;

All in robes of orient light,
Tinted from the azure skies,
Breathing o'er chaotic night
Perfume fresh from Paradise.

Ah, how then, O Queen of day,
I for thee would pour my tears;
Mourning o'er the long delay
Of a thousand coming years:

Yearning with a strong desire
Thy vivific birth to see;
All my spirit's depth on fire
For the times that were to be.

Those triumphant days below
Not permitted to behold,
Waiting long, while, ebb and flow,
Silently the ages roll'd,—

Now at last, in realms serene
Of immortal life and love,
I salute thee as the Queen
Of Jerusalem above.

Thee with joy ecstatic greet,
Glist'ning in a golden crown,
And before thy sacred feet
Lay my harp in homage down.

[*The Procession moves on.*

Peal of trumpets, and enter, with the Prophet Isaias *at his right hand,* King Ezechias, *bearing a lily-like flower; succeeded by other* Kings of Juda, *all royally arrayed; after whom* Judith *and attendant women, with garlands on their heads, moving to a solemn measure.*

ISAIAS (*taking up David's harp*).

Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
Arise thee now and shine;
Put on, put on thy purple robe
And diadem divine;
Though darkness cover all the earth,
Yet thou shalt sing for glee;
For, lo, the glory of the Lord
Hath risen upon thee!

Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
Thy streets are pav'd with gold;
Thy pearly halls and palaces
Are glorious to behold;
Thy walls of jasper are inlaid
With every precious gem;
How pure, how lovely is the sight
Of our Jerusalem!

Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
No tear in thee is known;
Thy bright and fragrant courts were made
For happiness alone;
The Lord alone thy Temple is,
And calls thee by His name;
The Lamb alone is all the light
Of our Jerusalem!

Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
Thou City of the skies;
Dear City of our King and God;
Dear object of our sighs!
How blest, how blest are thy abodes,
And those who dwell in them!
Thrice welcome here, O Virgin dear,
To thy Jerusalem! [*The Procession moves on.*

Peal of trumpets, and enter to martial music, with banners, a solemn Pageant; in which, escorted by troops of war diversly arrayed, Allegorical Personifications of the Four Great Empires *are borne in pomp upon triumphal Cars drawn by yokes of lions, leopards, and other emblematic animals; then* Jeremias *and* Ezechiel *walking side by side; after whom others of the* Prophets; Daniel *last, attended by the* Three Holy Children, *and bearing in his hand an enigmatical scroll.*

DANIEL.

God who guides the wheeling spheres,
Keeping still His promise firm;
Lo, the Seventy Weeks of years
Speed to their prophetic term.

Vainly strove Assyria's pride,
Persian wealth, or Grecian power;
Vainly each in turn defied
Its inevitable hour.

Rome herself so strong to day,
Greatest empire of them all,
Of her very strength the prey,
Marches onward to her fall.

Other kingdoms, Lord, than Thine,
To eternity pretend;
One alone, by right divine,
Lives eternal to the end.

One alone, while others fade,
Growing with the growing years,
Undecaying, undecay'd,
Ever in its prime appears!

Hail, of that high Kingdom Queen!
Fairest Form that earth has trod!
Hail, Inheritance of men!
Empress of the Church of God!

[*The Procession moves on.*

Peal of trumpets, and enter alternately boys and girls of the Princely families of Juda, *bearing under silver canopies various sacred emblems of* Mary *mentioned in the Litany of Loretto, such as the* Mystical Rose, *the* Tower of Ivory, *the* Ark of the Covenant, *&c.; then* Angels *transporting, embowered in laurels, a representation of the* Holy House of Nazareth; *after whom four groups of noble youths in succession, bearing other figurative types.*

FIRST GROUP

(*Bearing a Golden Thurible*).

Hail to the Censer of purest gold,
For Heav'n's high Temple ordain'd of old!
Which, fill'd with fire of Deity,
Breathes around on all creation
Fragrant incense of salvation;

Breathes upon Adam's sickly race
Holy perfume of healing grace!
Glory, glory, glory to thee,
Mother of Immortality!

SECOND GROUP

(*Bearing an Almond-Stem in Blossom*).

Hail to Aaron's fruitful rod!
Hail to the fruitful Mother of God,
Blooming in pure virginity!
Whose blossom delicately fair
Is truth, and honour, and virtue rare;
Whose leaves a mystical odour shed,
Thrilling with bliss the living and dead.
Glory, glory, glory to thee,
Mother of Immortality!

THIRD GROUP

(*Bearing a Golden Urn*).

Hail to Mary's immaculate Heart!
Hail to the Urn preserv'd apart
In Nature's inmost Sanctuary!
Urn of sinless mortal clay,
In which the Manna immortal lay;
Destin'd in God's prophetic page
To be the life of a future age.
Glory, glory, glory to thee,
Mother of Immortality!

FOURTH GROUP

(*Bearing a Golden Candlestick*).

Hail to the Cresset sevenfold!
Branching in lilies of virgin gold
From a stem of beauteous symmetry;
Whose oil is the Spirit of grace and might!
Whose overflowing ocean of light
Is He who, from eternity born,
Kindled the stars at creation's morn!
Glory, glory, glory to thee,
Mother of Immortality!

Last of all appear the Hermits of Mount Carmel, *with palms in their hands, conducting six ethereal steeds, which draw after them the* Car of Elias, *marvellously glittering. Seated in the car is seen the* Archangel Gabriel.

SONG OF THE HERMITS OF MOUNT CARMEL.

Hail to the Flower of pure delight,
Blooming on sacred Carmel's height!

CHORUS.

Flower of Carmel,
Flowering Vine,
Shed thy sweets
On us who are thine!
Virginal Mother,
Star of the sea;
Glory of Heaven,
We glorify thee!

SONG.

Hail to the Cloud that came in sight,
Rising afar on the fields of light,
As Elias knelt upon Carmel's height!

CHORUS.

Flower of Carmel,
Flowering Vine,
Shed thy sweets
On us who are thine!
Virginal Mother,
Star of the sea;
Glory of Heaven,
We glorify thee!

SONG.

Hail to the Car of effulgence bright,
On which to Heaven's etherial height,
In human flesh, and in human sight,
Ascends the Incarnate Infinite.

CHORUS.

Flower of Carmel,
Flowering Vine,
Shed thy sweets
On us who are thine!
Virginal Mother,
Star of the sea;
Glory of Heaven,
We glorify thee!

[*On arriving in front of the throne, the Car stops.*

GABRIEL (*descending*).

O brighter than all brightness, living Altar
Of light's pure temple, Joy exuberant
Of all the patriarchs, Queen of Palestine,
And splendour of the New Jerusalem!
Know that in Paradise is held to-day,
In honour of thy birth, a royal feast;
Which, in the name of this most high Procession,
I supplicate thy sceptr'd majesty
With its imperial presence to adorn.
In hope whereof, this empyrean car
(Once only touch'd by mortal foot, what time
It bore Elias through the fields of space)
Attends thy bidding. See, its fiery steeds,
Already, of their happy task aware,
Curvet, impatient for their precious freight.

MARY.

My soul hath fainted for the living Courts
Of my eternal God. Most joyfully
I go with you; this only boon entreating,
That I may bring with me these sacred Parents
Here seated at my side.

GABRIEL.

Lady, not yet is it permitted them
To pass beyond this outer vestibule;
Hereafter, by the grace of thy dear Son,
To be receiv'd into immortal bliss,

When, turn'd in death to their original dust,
Again from dust they rise, created new
For new and more divine felicity
Than that by disobedience forfeited.
At present in the world their portion lies,
There to toil on in faith and hopeful love,
Through good and evil mingled; till at length,
Their lifelong penance o'er, they drink with thee
Of endless joys, and keep perpetual feast.

[Mary, *with a tender smile of pity and hope embracing our First Parents, yields them to* Gabriel; *then ascends the Car, which majestically moves forward. Meanwhile* Gabriel *leads away in an opposite direction* Adam *and* Eve, *gazing wistfully back.*

END OF THE MASQUE.

The Masque over, the Cloister reunites as at first, the fountain in the Court begins again to play, and the two Choirs of Priests and Virgins withdraw.

Enter Azael *and Companions.*

AZAEL (*kneeling to Ithuriel*).

Mighty Prince, our task is o'er,
And from Phantasy's domain,
Through her secret golden door,
Hither we return again;
And commend our pageantry
To this noble Company,

Ready to receive for it
Praise or blame as may befit.

ITHURIEL.

Rise, Azael, and accept our general thanks—
Thyself and fellow-actors—each and all;
Scarce could we deem the whole a spectacle,
So true was each performer to his part;
So true your evanescent scenery
To nature's subtlest tints and lineaments.
See, even yet there lingers on the cheek
Of this fair sleeping Maid a roseate smile,
As from the fanning of the golden wings
Of some ethereal vision, foretaste sweet
Of heavenly joys; such power your masque hath had:
Whereof that perfect soul, which evermore
Receives of all things in proportion due,
Admitted whatsoever for her state
Was most expedient.

ANGEL OF ROME.

We, Azael, too,
Render our grateful thanks; in sign of which
Accept this ring of purest chrysolite,
Which anciently on Numa's finger shone,—
Numa, of early Rome pacific king.
And he, 'tis said, in his Egerian grot,
From the great Sibyl of Cumæan song

Receiv'd it as the heirloom of his race.
A royal province scarce could purchase it.

AZAEL.

Aught by thy hand bestow'd were high reward,
Most noble Potentate. Would that the work
Had equall'd but the will; then had there been
A spectacle more worthy the spectators.

ANGEL OF ROME (*to the Angels of Italy*).

Princes and sacred Peers, the blazing sun,
O'ertopping yonder pile of burnish'd gold,
And circling with a rainbow diadem
The snowy head of this fair cloistral fount,
Proclaims our near departure; come then, all,
And, kissing each in turn the heavenly feet
Of this dear glory of Jerusalem,
Let us entreat her blessing on ourselves,
And on the cities, shores, and territories,
Committed to our several custodies.

[*The Angels of Italy kneel two and two before* Mary, *still asleep, and kiss her feet, singing meanwhile as follows:*

Age with age contended,
At Creation's dawn,
Which might see the day
When Mary should be born:

But the Lord had hidden
His decree sublime,
Destin'd to prevail
In its appointed time.

They who came the foremost
Empty sought the skies;
And the last of all
Has won the happy prize.

Hail, thou Age of ages,
Centre of the rest!
Hail, predestin'd Era
Infinitely blest!

Hail, thou bright Aurora,
Chasing nature's gloom,
Hope of all before,
And bliss of all to come!

Age of peace on earth!
Age of joy in heaven!
Age of grace restored!
Age of guilt forgiven!

Thee the coming cycles
Grateful shall proclaim,
Germ of all their life,
And fount of all their fame.

Earth from thee hereafter
Shall its date renew,
And to thee look back
All the ages through;

As a pillar shining,
From a mount sublime,
O'er the tracts of space!
And o'er the tide of time!

ITHURIEL (*to the Angel of Rome*).

Doubt not, imperial Chieftain, but our Lady
Will breathe her supplications to high Heav'n,
Omnipotential with the Omnipotent,
For every several object of your prayers.
And for thy comfort learn, that mighty Rome,
Now in the bonds of pagan darkness swath'd,
Hereafter shall, in reverence to Mary
And Mary's Child, exceed your utmost hope.
A prophecy there is of ancient date,
Unbrokenly preserved from age to age
By this high Temple's angel Guardians;—
That, in the days to come, this holy Salem,
In ruins laid, must to a holier City
Give place, whose name is "Strength," prepar'd of old
Upon the bosom of th' eternal floods,
And lifted on a sevenfold mystic hill;
Which in its day predestin'd shall become
The hierarchic centre of the world,

(As to the Jews Jerusalem before)
Embracing in one faith, one polity,
Beneath one Head in heav'n, and one on earth
Pontifical, the whole of humankind;
With ordinances, priesthood, all things, new,
Promis'd through endless ages to endure.
This mystery to thy attentive mind
We here commit, in its most certain time
To be reveal'd before the universe
In sight of all. And now, if go ye must,
At least, in memory of your visit here,
Accept, celestial Princes, at our hands
These parting gifts; for thee, high Potentate,
This fair embroider'd piece, the priceless work
Of Mary's pearly fingers; which remember
To keep for happy Rome in after-days.
For thy companions here these flowers, new cull'd,

[*He plucks some flowers from the plants at Mary's side.*

Children of Mary's care, and like herself
Of bloom and fragrance immarcessible,
So only they approach no mortal hand;
And if, as we entreat, ye shall appear
At our festivities another year,
There wait you other gifts more precious still,
So promises your own Ithuriel.

[*The two companies of Angels mutually embrace: after which, a globe of light descending, the* Angels of Rome *and* Italy *enter within it, and rapidly mount aloft.*

ITHURIEL.

Now, comrades, to your tasks; for, as I think,
The eyelids of our Mistress soon will part,
And to our wistful gaze reveal anew
Their hidden Paradise; the dawn to us
Of day, more truly than the golden light
That flashes from the kindling Orient.
We must be ready at our several posts
To wait upon her wishes and fulfil
Our daily ministries. Let music sound;
Let a celestial perfume breathe around;
Let all be sparkling, gladsome, and serene,
To greet the waking of creation's Queen.

THE EASTER SHIP.

Dies venit, dies tua,
In qua reflorent omnia.
Lætemur et nos in viam
Tua reducti dextera.

All ye who lament o'er England's fall
From the Holy Catholic Faith!
Hear what the Hermit of Finisterre
From his rocky eyry saith:

Last of that ancient brotherhood,
Who, forth from Tintern's Choir,
Were forc'd across the raging seas
By cruel Henry's ire.

He saith, that early one Easter morn,
In false Elizabeth's reign,
Musing sadly o'er England's fall,
He was looking out on the main:

From his narrow ledge of beetling rock,
Athwart the basaltic steep,
That foremost stands, confronting the swell
Of the broad Atlantic deep;—

When he saw a Ship in the misty dawn
Becalm'd on the silent sea;
Her sails all drooping—her helm unwatch'd—
As though no crew had she!

From stem to stern so quaintly shap'd,
A ship of Eld it seem'd;
Anon some birthling of the dawn,
So goldenly it gleam'd.

Then, as he gaz'd, there suddenly burst
A storm right overhead,
So deadly black, at once he knew
From Satan's breath it sped.

And, lo! before his very eyes
That Ship went sinking down;
Till naught at last, of hull or mast,
Was left, but a spar alone;—

The topmost spar!—whence gallantly still,
In the face of the storm unfurl'd,
Old England's Catholic ensign wav'd,—
The Cross that rules the world!

Ah, then I thought that all was o'er;
And I breath'd aloft a prayer,
For those who, with the sinking Ship,
Were cruelly sinking there.

When, lo! a wonder most strange to tell!
But stranger far to see!
A wonder I scarce could have believ'd,
Had it been told to me!

For scarce had the Cross the waters kiss'd,
When, ere they could o'er it close,
Slowly—slowly—it mounted again,
And again the spar uprose;—

And after the spar, the three tall masts,
With sails of glistering white;
And after the masts, the Ship herself,
With all her armoury bright.

While softly, and softly, over the sea,
I heard a music pass,
Soothing the winds, and soothing the waves,
Till they lay as molten glass;

And in the East a vista began
To open, fold in fold,
Streaking all the ocean flood
With veins of purple and gold.

For now had risen the blessed Sun
Of the Resurrection Morn;
And his broad beam, in one full stream,
Upon the Ship was borne:

Whose deck one living topaz seem'd;
Each mast, a sapphire bright;
Each cord, of rainbow tissue wrought;
Each sail, of sheeted light;

The whole so wondrously appearing
Transfigur'd before mine eyes,
That the sight it fill'd my heart with tears,
My soul with Paradise.

Thus as I gaz'd, there stole along
A softly fanning breeze,
Breathing a solemn incense fresh
From Isles of the Southern seas.

The sails, they fill'd—the Ship she began
To walk the waters o'er;—
Full straight she steer'd;—full well I mark'd
She steer'd for England's shore.

While on her deck, in the sun's bright ray,
There knelt, in place of a crew,
A goodly company, all in prayer,
Whom for England's Saints I knew :

Save Her who stood at the helm apart,
With a calm majestic mien ;
And Her I knew, by her robe of blue,
To be Heav'n's immortal Queen!

That Virgin Mother—who loves the Isle,
Where she was belov'd of yore ;
That Virgin Mother—who loves it still,
Though it loves Her now no more.

O Vision of bliss!—She turn'd her head ;
She smil'd benignly on me ;
Pointing her hand to my native land,
Far Northward over the sea.

Then faster and faster the vessel sped,
O'er the breadth of the bounding surge ;
Till into a speck I beheld it fade,
On the dim horizon's verge.

Such was the Vision, divinely fair,
That on Easter Sunday morn,
I, the Hermit of Finisterre,
Beheld at break of dawn.

And twice again, in the next two years,—
Believe it as ye may,—
The selfsame thing, at the selfsame hour,
I saw on the selfsame day.

Now, therefore, ye who for England weep,
As lost for ever to God,
Down in the black Satanic deep
Of heresy's awful flood,—

Give ear, give ear to this PROPHECY,
Which, with his parting breath,
The last of Tintern's exil'd sons
For your consolation saith.

THREE centuries shall England lie
Beneath the storm of Hell;
Three centuries her Church shall fade,
And all but seem to fail;

Three centuries her Saints shall mourn
To see the Faith expire;
Ivy shall climb, and birds shall sing,
In many a ruin'd choir.

But in the fourth, on Peter's chair
A Pope shall sit and reign,
Who, in the Virgin's glorious might,
Shall turn the tide again.

He first to all the world shall give
The long-desired Decree,
Proclaiming our sweet Lady's gift
Of peerless Purity.

Shall name Her THE IMMACULATE,
Without a stain conceiv'd;
And stamp the doctrine as of Faith,
Immutably believ'd.

She, in return, to Peter's crown
Shall gratefully restore
Its long-lost gem, the Isle of Saints,
Far brighter than before;—

Cleans'd with the blood of martyr'd priests,
And virgins' holy tears,
That must for guilty England flow
For twice a hundred years.

Then shall the children think again
Of their dear Fathers' home;
And fly, as doves upon the wing,
To long-forgotten Rome.

Then shall the Abbey rear its head,
And open wide its door;
And lift its sacrificial chant,
As in the days of yore.

Then shall the glorious Cross of Christ
No more dishonour'd lie;
Then shall the throne of Britain wail
For its apostasy;

Then shall the sons of Scotia hide
The wreck their fathers made;
Then Celt and Saxon shall unite
Beneath St. Peter's shade.

Then, rank in rank, and file on file,
The armies of the Lord
Shall march, to spread through England's breadth
The Faith so long abhorr'd;

Which, once receiv'd, shall forth again
As from a centre sweep,
Borne on the wings of England's fleets
Across the trackless deep,

To earth's remotest empires,
Now sunk in night forlorn;
To Isles, and shoreless Continents,
Of nations yet unborn:

Till such a harvest shall be reap'd,
Beyond the world's belief,
As shall console the Church of God
For centuries of grief.

E'EN now, O England, I behold,
With solemn pace and slow,
Through thy long desecrated shrines
The glad Procession go.

I see the mitred Pontiff tread
Their festal aisles along;
I see the Crucifix o'erhead;
I hear their olden song.

The fragrant incense high aloft
Its waving circlet weaves;
And Rome, with more than Mother's joy,
Her erring child receives.

O day, O blissful day, for thee
How many saints have sigh'd!
And only to behold thy face
Most gladly would have died.

O prayer of longing Christendom!
O balm for sorrows past!
What joy 'twill be, when thou shalt come!
As come thou shalt at last.

SUCH is the hope that evermore
My lonely spirit cheers.
O Jesu! speed the time;—O speed
The slowly marching years!

And grant of Thy dear mercy, Lord,
That when these things shall be,
I, safe from my long pilgrimage
In heavenly light with Thee,

May from the crystal battlements
That day of days behold;
And in the sight, for present grief,
Rejoice a thousandfold.

ST. KENELM'S WELL.

COME, all of you, and sit around,
And listen while I tell
A tale from ancient chronicles
About St. Kenelm's well:
But first, good Christians, one and all,
Upon the Saint in glory call.

CHORUS { *O sweet St. Kenelm,*
O sweet St. Kenelm,
Pray for us! Pray for us,
O sweet St. Kenelm!

ST. KENELM'S well, St. Kenelm's well,
How calm and clear it flows!
As when a thousand years ago
By miracle it rose:
So flows the stream of Faith sublime,
For ever clear in every time.

This land was ancient Mercia,
Which far and wide you see;
And Kenelm he became its king
When seven years old was he:
A fairer little prince, I ween,
A holier child, was never seen.

But oh! what will not envy do?
This good and gracious boy
A cruel sister had, who sigh'd
His kingdom to enjoy;
And so, to gain her wicked will,
She plotted this sweet lamb to kill.

St. Kenelm rose at early dawn,
And prayed his little prayer;
But from his tender infant cheek
Had fled the roses fair;
Then signing with the Cross his breast,
He thus his aged nurse address'd:

"O Ella, dear, this morn I dreamt
I stood upon a tree,
All in a flush of blossoms bright,
When down it fell with me;
And like a bird I soar'd away:—
Now read to me the dream, I pray."

"Ah, sweetest child, the dream I read,"—
Thus made the nurse reply;
"Cut off in virtue's opening bloom,
I fear me thou must die:
But like a bird thy soul shall mount,
To sip and sing at glory's fount."

St. Kenelm clapp'd his little hands,
"God speed the time," quoth he;
"I've often pray'd that I might go
With holy Mary to be.
One sight of Christ in glory clear
Is better than a kingdom here."

That eve they led him sporting forth
Across the woodland wild,
And there, beneath a maythorn pink,
They slew the royal child;
And buried him, with witness none
Except the eye of God alone.

O long and long was search around
For Mercia's monarch made;
But the cowslips they had mantled thick
Above where he was laid;
And naught remain'd to lend a trace
Of little Kenelm's resting-place.

But not in vain the blood of Saints
  Upon the earth is sown;
And though their grave be hid from men,
  It is to Angels known:
For holy Angels love the just,
And keep a watch above their dust.

Far off, a thousand miles away,
  Across the land and main,
The Pope was chanting solemn mass
  In Peter's holy fane;
When God to him the spot reveal'd,
So long from British eye conceal'd.

Lo! down beside the altar floats
  A dove on azure wings,
Who in her beak a golden scroll
  Of mystic import brings:
"Of his fair head St. Kenelm shorn
Is sleeping low beneath a thorn."

To England straight the tidings fly,
  The hawthorn soon is found;
And crowds on crowds, to see their king,
  Flock in from all around;
As incorrupt in death he lay,
Like one who scarce was dead a day.

See now the Peers and Bishops wend
  In long funereal line,
With incense, cross, and silken pall,
  And gem-emblazon'd shrine;
And soon in Winchcomb's holy shade
The son is with his father laid.

But on his sister justice came,
  Pursuing close behind;
And all amidst her queenly state
  She pin'd, and pin'd, and pin'd;
Till in their sockets. day by day,
Her eyes had wasted both away.

Meanwhile, to show to all below
  His glory in the skies,
Up from the spot where he had lain
  Did this fair spring arise—
Memorial of the sacred sod
Where rested once a Saint of God.

Here miracles of might are wrought
  On deaf, and lame, and blind;
Here all who only come in faith
  A benediction find.
St. Kenelm! for the pilgrims pray,
Who in thy praise are met to-day.

Benedicite, omnia Opera Domini, Domino.

Song of the Three Children.

ODES.

I.

ODE TO THE POWERS OF THE UNIVERSE.

Benedicite, omnes Virtutes Domini, Domino.

Hail, Powers sublime, all hail!
Which in the natural or spiritual worlds,
Or here, or in far space,
Or in the far infinity beyond,
His wondrous work perform;
Of whom ye are, and whom,
Inanimate or animate, ye serve!

Hail, first to you,
Dread armies of the Lord!
Ye glorious Seraphim and Cherubim!
And Thrones sublime!
Ye countless Dominations, Virtues, Powers!
Ye Principalities! Archangels bright!

And Angels ever blest,
In solemn order rang'd!
Hail, Spirits of the Just,
Whose prayer is strength!
Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs of all time!
Virgins, and Confessors, and Pontiffs good!
In purest bliss,
Reigning with Heaven's high Queen!

Next hail to you,
Great Powers of this our sphere!—
Or who in Holy Church,
Consociate with Peter's central throne,
Regents of Christ,
With sacramental might
Bind and unbind on earth as He in Heaven!—
Or who on chair of state
Seated supreme,
High o'er the stormy world
Your iron sceptres wield,
Types of His reign to come!

Hail, too, to ye,
The Soul's high Faculties!
Intelligence divine!
Invention, Memory, Will,
Conscience, Imagination, Feeling, Sense!
Choice flowers of life!
By grace yet lovelier made.

Ye last, all hail!
Great Forces, which mankind
The Powers of nature call,
Thou, Instinct deep!
Pure mystery of God!
Reigning amid the worlds of living things!
And thou, great sister Force!
Of Gravitation nam'd,
Sovereign supreme amid material laws!
Nor less ye other kindred Influences!
Unsearchable in might,
And divers in your kinds!
Which in the earth and water, fire and air,
From hour to hour
Your silent task fulfil!

All these, and many more yet unreveal'd,
Or in the book of Nature or of God,
Each within each involv'd,
Wheel within wheel, in many-mingled maze,
(Like that strange vision which Ezechiel saw
By Chobar's mystic stream)
All these, where'er they be,
Are Thy great work, O Lord;
And here, or in far space,
Or in the far infinity beyond,
Not of themselves,
But in Thee only, and for Thee exist,

Dread emblems of Thyself, who all hast made!
Thou the beginning and the end of all!
Nor know we aught,
Where each its issue finds,
Or in the other merges,—nor can guess
The proper essence of the very least;
So great our ignorance
Of that untold, immeasurable abyss,
In which Creation moves!
Save that at times of some vast scheme
We catch the vanishing glimpse, as in a dream;
And hear at intervals a tone
Wafted down from spheres unknown,
Telling of things diviner far
Than any that around us are!

II.

ODE TO THE SKY.

Benedicite, cœli, Domino.

O SEA of thoughts!
Wave upon wave
Of mystery and wonder without end,
Borne in upon my soul!
Casting her upward glance on yonder breadth
Of unsupported dome,
In viewless joinings knit—

Yon azure firmament,
The ocean incorruptible
Of space immense,
Beyond all suns and spheres,
Beyond the starry depth,
Beyond attenuate ether's utmost bound,
Stretching its onward way!
O dreary solitude!—O mystic realm
Of primal chaos!—Distance infinite!—
Where e'en imagination drops her wing!—
O barrier unconceiv'd,
Parting the worlds of spirit and of sense!
Blue mirror of bright Heaven!
Which from beneath we mortals gaze upon;
Whose upper coast,—creation's table-land,—
Is that great sea of glass,
The crystal pavement of th' eternal throne!
O void unsearchable of depth and height!
Up whose unfathom'd vista as we glance,
The skirts of immortality far seen
Break on the trembling gaze;
As when, within the eye,
Searching deep down by mirror's aid,
We seem the soul to see,
Coil'd up and basking in her own eternity!

Praise thou the Lord most high,
All-spanless sky!

Whose everlasting Hand
Has, like a tent, thy veil cerulean spread!
Praise Him, ye Heavens!
Praise Him, ye waters, that above the Heavens
Extend your awful shade!
Proclaim, proclaim,
The glory of His Name,
Thou light, that flowest in a flood divine!
Declare His praise
Through ceaseless nights and days,
Ye stars, that like the Saints in glory shine!
O that to me were given
To blend my voice with your ecstatic song!
And through the spheres of Heaven
The peal of jubilation to prolong!

And what though stars there be, as I have heard,
Wandering through space,
Rayless and dead,
Consign'd to blackest night for evermore?
O let not such
Be my sad lot, I pray,
When on my vision fades this earthly day;
But place me, Lord, amid Thy living orbs,
Though dimmest there,
Though least of all
In that vast galaxy;
Yet counted Thine, and number'd with Thy Saints!

And ever let me shine,
Not amid heathen constellations old,
Arcturus, Pleiads, or Orion huge,
But in that saintly cluster of bright stars
New found of late in the new hemisphere,
Thy Cross, O Jesu!
Crowning the arch of night!
The glory of the kingdoms of the South!
Greeting, in pagan climes unknown,
With a thrice welcome and familiar smile,
The weary wanderer on ocean tide.

III.

ODE TO THE EARTH.

Benedicat terra Dominum, laudet et superexaltet eum in sæcula.

O Earth, from whose dread womb
I, after wandering long
In faithful miner's charge,
With joy at last
Once more emerge upon the sunny sward,
Weary and travel-stain'd!
Declare, declare,
Within thy secret depth what marvels dwell,—
Marvels by us unguess'd,
Who walk thine upper shore.

For many such thou hast, as well I know,
Or spiritual, or of material kind;
Dread Angels subterrene,
Mighty in works of ill;
Brute things, of which
In learned book no form or name appears;
And wrought in thousand shapes
Down thy long avenues of grottoes fair,
A hidden growth of secret substances,
Whereof our brightest gems but tokens are;
And rivers of strange fire,
Far underneath,
Preparing, day by day, a second flood;
And treasures all untold
Of virgin gold,
Which evermore from man thou dost withhold;
And cities underground,
A multitude of mansions widely spread,
Where rest, in sleep profound,
Th' unbusied nations of the countless dead!
A labyrinth sublime,
Down whither, through all time,
But ONE alone
Descending, hath been known
Again the crystal stair of life to climb.

But for marvels why explore,
O Earth, thy hidden central core?

We but thine outer rind beholding,
New wonders see for ever there unfolding.
There are the waters gather'd into seas,
Broad continents and isles,
Rivers and lakes, and ever-shifting breeze,
Dimpling thy face with smiles.
There are the forests tall,
The cultur'd landscape green,
Rock, grove, and waterfall,
Blue skies serene,
And of the seasons blest the gently varying scene.
While ever round thee, in their silent flight,
Fair day and solemn night
Each after each proceed,
Unwearied pilgrims, scattering on their way,
Or sun-bespangled ray,
Or dewy darkness answering nature's need;
Waking to toil, or folding into rest,
The thousand peoples shelter'd on thy breast.

But chiefly me, O Earth, thy mountains fill
With wonder at His power and skill,
Who pil'd aloft their soaring height,
As monuments of His eternal might!
Or verdurous with groves,
Or bleak with barren crag,
Silver'd with snow, or capp'd with roaring flame;
All they alike their great Creator Lord proclaim.

Hail Etna fair!
Hail leafy Apennine and Pyrenees,
Athos, and that vast range Carpathian nam'd,
Taurus and Caucasus,
Vesuvius, Himalaya, Atlas old,
Historic Alps,
Andes, and Apalachian heights sublime!
Hail, too, to ye
Mountains of God!
Which of His glory saw in ancient days!
Thou patriarch Ararat!
Thou, Mount of Vision, dear for Isaac's sake!
Sinai and Hor,
Carmel and Lebanon, and many more!
And ye, diviner still,
Earth's choicest Mounts,
Whose verdant sides were press'd
By the blest footsteps of the Son of man,—
Fair Olivet, with Sion's holy hill,
And Thabor's flowery floor,
And Galilee's dear Mount without a name,
Where Christ, new-ris'n, to His Apostles came!

Thus, O Earth, upon thy face
I a thousand wonders trace;
Beauties old, and beauties new,
Ever springing to the view!

And oft in meditative song
Musing, as I walk along,
On th' interminable design
Shown in nature's work divine;—
Musing upon the tide of times untold,
When o'er the mountain-tops primeval ocean roll'd,—
I wonder if, by slow degrees,
Thou, Lord, didst into land convert the seas;
Or rather in its present state
By one sheer act the whole create!
Yet this I know, and this proclaim,
That unto Thee it was the same,
Or in a moment all to frame,
Or to elaborate the whole by stages,
Through the slow growth of million million ages.

Wherefore howe'er the work was wrought,
All praise be Thine, who all hast made;
All praise be Thine, who all hast bought,
With the price thy Lifeblood paid;
What time descending from the empyreal height,
Thou who creation with Thy finger framest,
Begotten God of God, and Light of Light,
The uncreated Word, created flesh becamest!

IV.

ODE TO THE HEAT AND COLD.

Benedicite ignis et æstus Domino; benedicite frigus et æstus Domino.

Ye Heat and Cold!
Creatures most opposite!
Betwixt you twain ofttimes
In a strange doubt I stand,
Which out of which proceeds;
Nor what ye are, nor whence,
Can I at all divine,
Unvers'd in natural things;
Yet have I learnt
Not to this little globe
Your office to confine,
Ranging through space,
Beyond where eye can trace,
Or thought the goal assign.

And each invisible
In its own nature seems;
Yet hath from God its own investiture
And special outward robe,
Wherein from ancient days itself it shows:
Thou, Heat, in flame appearing; thou, Cold, in ice and snows!
All for the sake of our poor mortal being,

By mercy's heedful law;
Lest we not seeing,
Nor of their presence warn'd, too near should draw,
And perish quite extinct in their devouring maw!

And Heat a docile creature doth appear,
Though violent at times;
And we abuse her as our bondslave here,
Abettor in our crimes;
Who, soon unchain'd, shall us and all consume,
The partner of our guilt and of our doom.

But the Cold dwells apart,
Inflexible and stern in his own place,
Seated on high,
Beneath the upper sky,
In regions calm and still,
Where evermore he worketh his own will,
And changeth not for us his rigid face;
Nor unto man himself will bend,
Either to be his servant or his friend:
Save when in downy snow
O'er the raw glebe he deigns his cloak to throw;
O power of Love divine to tame him so!
That one, who doth for earth so little care,
Thus should lend his mantle rare,
Earth's tender things to pity and to spare.

And of this mantle much I might unfold,
Wrought on angelic loom in days of old :
How, mindful of its heavenly birth,
No stain it takes of earth,
But presently returns to Heav'n again ;
On this vile sod
That bears the curse of God,
Unable to remain;
Or how, with curious eye,
If we but venture in its folds to pry,
Seeking the woof to find,
Which through its maze doth wind—
Scarce with a finger's tip
Have we begun the delicate web to trace,
Woven in crystal pure,—
When lo, the skein
Beneath our mortal touch dissolves apace,
Unwilling to endure
The hand that might its purity profane !
O, proof to all
Of our sad primal fall !
O that of sinful flesh so great should be the bane !

V.

ODE TO THE DEW AND RAIN.

Benedicite, imber et ros, Domino.

Ye Dew and Rain!
How pleasant is your task, who, hand in hand,
Tend the green innocent herbs
With your blest ministerings!

Dear brethren are ye both;
But dearer thou, O Dew, the elder born!
For later came the rain,
Rough in his ways, and sometimes harmful found,
As suits a ruin'd world.
But the soft dew, it is a patient thing,
Quiet of spirit, ever doing good,
At no time harm;
And pitiful for man and nature's fall;
Ministering unseen, through midnight hours,
To fainting mortal things!
Offspring of Eden days!
In whose clear globe
Eden is faintly seen reflected still!

Yet pleasant, too, art thou, O Rain, at times;
And there has been, when I have lov'd to sit
On some high crag,
Watching thine armies scour

The breadth of vale below ;
As, troop by troop, they swept
With cloudy flags unfurl'd,
Muster'd in distant climes,—
Or wild Norwegia, or Siberian waste,
Or melting Polar snows,
Atlantic deep, or wizard Egypt's shore,—
Children of many lands and many tongues,
Under one law,
United each with each,
In solemn contract of self-sacrifice,
To fertilise the world with their sweet blood!

O Dews! O Showers!
Praise Him, who you ordain'd ;
Praise Him with me, and I with you,
Friends of my early days!
And God forefend
Judea's lot be thine, dear British Land!
Though stain'd with guilt of deadliest sacrilege,
Yet not as yet of God forsaken quite.
A glorious clime was hers,
Nurtur'd in morning dew and evening shower,
The promise of her Lord.
But O, her children slew their Lord ;
And evermore since then,
Up from the guilty soil His Blood hath cried,
And year by year her Heav'n hath dried o'erhead,

Till all her sky is brass ;
Nor dew nor rain descend,
Save where, in nook forlorn,
Faith, far retiring,
The penitent tear outpours
For Sion's evil deeds ;
There still, they say, the golden flow'ret springs,
The rain-drops fall,
And balmy dews distil ;
To show that e'en in vengeance mercy lives !

VI.

ODE TO THE SEASONS.

Benedicite, sol et luna, Domino.

What strain was that,
Soft as the falling dew,
Which sang but now at my heart's open door ?
Came it from earth ?
Or, rather, from some Cherub had it birth ?

Of Spring its burden was,
Spring, green and glad;
Sweet remnant left of happy Eden days :
Next of the Summer-tide ;
Of Autumn next ; and then of Winter sere ;—
Weaving a web of praise all through the livelong year !
For lovely are the Seasons in their turn

(So went the song)—
Lovely, and speak Thy love,
O Thou, who all hast made.
Lovely the Spring,
When forth she trips upon the dewy lawn,
With hope and joy irradiant in her smile;
And, warbling as she goes,
Scatters, with liberal hand,
Treasures of Paradise on all around.
And lovely thou,
O Summer, jasmine-crown'd!
Blossom of Spring!
Who out of Spring dost bud
Into an odorous flower!
Unmark'd the transformation, day by day,
Till, lo! the Spring is gone, and in her place
We see thy jocund face,
Peeping above the shoulders of bright May!
Then would we have thee evermore to stay:
But, lo! with solemn tread
Stalks Autumn, in his robe of many dyes;
And, soon as he his magic wand applies,
Shade after shade,
Nature begins to fade,
And into evanescence goes her way,—
Loveliest of all, perchance, in her decay.
Anon comes Winter, and locks up the door,
Till Spring returns again, to vanish as before!

These are Thy works, O Lord;
By Angel-hands
Divinely minister'd to this our globe;—
Thy works in silence wrought
(In silence all great things
Do evermore proceed);
And still, while earth shall stand,
There stands Thy promise sure,
That seed-time, harvest, cold and heat,
Sunshine and rain, shall evermore endure,
For man to sow his glebe, and reap his grain secure.
O gracious love! that no abatement knows,
But to unjust and just unceasing mercy shows!

And many are the joys beside,
Which in their turn belong
(So went the song)
To all the several Seasons as they glide;
God with His goodness garlanding the year,
And with all-bounteous art
Setting the one against the other part,
That so no time may be
From grateful praises free.
Thus, lest in Winter it should grieve the mind
To see the wreck that Summer leaves behind,
Lo! then the Saviour's birth comes round,
To deck with second Spring the ground.
And lest in Spring we should too much rejoice,

And make this earth the Eden of our choice,
Lo! then Mount Calvary
And its dread Cross are present to the eye:
Almost we hear Him groan, and see Him die!
While in each Season, did we but attend,
We might perceive the warning of a friend;
Each as an Oracle, O Lord, of Thine,
Reminding us, in turn, of truths divine:—
Autumn, of life's decay;
Winter, of death's still tomb;
Spring, of the Resurrection Day;
Summer, of Heaven's own bloom!

VII.

ODE TO THE FLOWERS.

Benedicite, universa germinantia in terra, Domino.

Green things, green things of Earth!
Bless the Lord evermore;
Him praise who gave you birth,
And magnify His goodness o'er and o'er;
The bounties undeserv'd,
Which He from age to age upon your race doth pour.

Green things, green things of Earth!
Brief is your span
In this our latter time;

Unlike that earlier state,
When first in Paradise your life began
In nature's happy prime!
For Adam's sake the world a curse doth wear,
And in his fall ye share.
O, partners in one doom!
Betwixt your race and ours let friendship be;
Give us of your bright blooms
To deck our tombs,
And we in your short lives will honour ye.

All honour to all flowers
Of every hue!
Thou, Heav'n! give showers;
And thou, O Earth! give dew;
Thou, Sun! give heat; thou, Light, thyself distil,
Till every tint hath drunk of thee its fill!
While I, beneath the sylvan shade
Of some deep umbrageous glade,
Sitting on the grassy ground,
Sing to the Angels all around;
Praising the meadows green,
With rills that run between,
And cowslips' heads just seen:—
Praising the primrose sweet,
And purple violet,
And gorse of golden hue,
And hyacinthian blue,

Beneath the forest high,
Spread like a mimic sky;—
Praising their great Creator Lord,
Who made them what they are,
Whose Love the Heav'ns outpour'd,
And of the smallest daisy hath a care.

And ofttimes on His word divine
Meditating, line by line,
And in the bud's unfolding flower
Tracing His eternal power,
I praise the rod, which, dead before,
Its blooming tufts of almond bore;—
I praise the hyssop on the wall;
I praise the cedar's branching hall;
I praise the lily's fair attire
Which Jesus bids me to admire,
Setting such a lowly thing
Above the pomp of Israel's King!
  Anon before my fancy lie
Branches green of palm and bay,
Scatter'd thick along the way
  Where Christ is passing by;
And, presently, methinks I see,
All in moonlight shadows rise,
The garden of Gethsemane,
Slowly before my tearful eyes;
O, place most mystical and dread!

From whence the Lord to death was led;
O, place unlike to Eden's bowers,
Where life was lost to us and ours!

Straightway, O Eden, at thy name
My heart is in a flame,
And fires with thirst of thine abyss of shade,—
Long cloister'd alleys green,
Cascades half seen,
Flower-woven paths for feet immortal made!
O, for that day of days,
When all again shall happy Eden be!
When earth shall one triumphant pæan raise;
When Paradise shall stretch far as the land and sea!
For this, O Lord, creation groans to Thee!
O, quickly come to save the people of Thy choice!
hen shall the grass be glad, and all the trees rejoice.

VIII.

ODE TO THE WINDS.

Benedicite, omnes spiritus Dei, Domino.

Sweet Breeze, all thanks to thee,
Who, as but now upon the grass I lay,
Leaving thy comrades gay,
Didst round about me play;
And fanning with thy balmy breath my cheek,

Didst in mine ear most eloquently speak;
Leading me on, as through a meadow bright,
With tinted flowers bedight;—
And still fresh-budding memories didst bring,
Cull'd from my boyhood's spring,
And lay them at my feet
In many a posy sweet,
Delighted in my heart of early times to sing.

For much I lov'd the winds in my young days;
Whereof thou, Breeze, aware,
Didst take my spirit up,
And in thy lap transport her back again
To times of youth gone by;
When in the clouds aloft
My swooping kite they bore;
Or blew my ship across the mimic waves;
Or lull'd me half asleep,
With deep Eolian murmurs of the pines;
Or swept the thistledown across the plain,
Mocking my pursuit vain;
Or for my pleasure lash'd the cornfields up
Into a troubled sea,
I gazing down from some high mount the while!

Of these things, then, O Breeze,
Most sweetly didst thou sing,
From thought to thought

Leading me unawares.
Nor of thy Mother Air
Wast thou without thy tale;
Nor of the numerous brethren whom thou hast,
Through the world's quarters spread:
Far different from herself,
As oft in children seen:
She evermore the same;
A changeful people they!

For tranquil is the Air,
In her own nature view'd;
God's wondrous instrument
Of manifold design,
Answering to many ends!
A harp invisible,
Rich with unnumber'd tones!
A magic scroll, on which the tongue of man
Writes at his will irrevocable words!
A mirror of our thoughts
By speech reflected forth!
Our life-blood's food!
A censer laden with all Nature's incense!
A treasure-house of dew and quick'ning showers!
The fuel of all fires!
A crystal screen betwixt the sun and earth,
Blending all rays, and melting light's sharp edge!
An ocean all unseen,

This earth encircling round,
Wherein we walk, and know it not,
As men upon the bottom of the deep!
A globe immense,
Receptacle of Nature's divers forms,
Abode of countless mutabilities,
Itself from age to age
The same abiding still!

But restless are the winds her progeny,—
Restless, and full of change;
Motion their life,—in motion evermore,—
Strange creatures, and a marvel in their ways!
Various their haunts!
More various still the tempers they display,
Constant alone in their inconstancy!
Now freezing cold,
From the far icy pole;
Now breathing warm and rich
From spicy climes,—now sharp with arrowy sleet
Of Tartary,—now booming loud and long
Portentous of the coming hurricane;
Now gentle as a lamb;
Now rudely blustering, or fiercely vex'd,
And now most sweetly sad;
Anon quite mad they seem
At window-casement heard,
As though an entrance forcing for themselves;

Wild raving beasts of night!
Listening to whom
The sick man cannot sleep;
Or if he sleep, 'tis vain,—
In dreams they follow still.
Yet e'en in this they work Thine ends, O Lord;
And Thou to each hast given
Its immemorial tone;
Whereby it preaches to the heart of man,
Concerning deeds long past,
And Judgment sweeping nigh,
Reminding conscience of forgotten things
Amidst the midnight storm!

IX.

ODE TO A SPRING.

Benedicite, fontes, Domino.

Sweet Fount, that from the bosom of the glebe
Dost evermore thy mother-milk distil,
To the poor fainting babes of vernal things!
Bright eye of earth,
Always to Heav'n upturn'd,
Glistening serene!
Thee of all spots around I cherish most;
Not for thy purity alone belov'd,
But for the memory's sake of musings past,

Beside thee oft indulg'd.
Here still retiring,
In a chance leisure-time,
I love to sit upon thy margin green,
And watch the dancing of those golden sands,
Thy natural hour-glass !—
For thereby, as I guess,
Thy gentle issue thou dost regulate,
From year to year
Still, hour by hour,
Running eterne !

O say, dear Fount, O say,
Through what strange windings to the upper day
Thy limpid waters flow ?—
For naught of this I know ;
Save what to me, of wonders there,
Truant Fancy may declare ;
When from wandering at will
Down amid thy grottoes still,
Back she comes with many a tale
Shrouded in a mystic veil,
Of the curious works of eld
There by her sole eye beheld !
How beneath this surface green,
In the heart of earth enshrin'd,
Regions lovely and serene,
By no mortal heart divin'd,

Regions full of marvels new,
Open on the dazzled view,
Answering to the upper space,
As in water face to face.
Where beneath an opal sky,
Emerald fields extended lie;
Other hills and vales than ours
Bloom with other trees and flowers;
Silver lakes their mirror bright
Spread before the ravish'd sight;
Songs of birds salute the ear,—
Birds that ne'er on earth appear!
Groves a golden foliage show;
Roses all in ruby blow;
Orchards bend with fruitage fair;
Soft and spicy breathes the air;
While the verdant lawns between,
Dance along, in sparkling sheen,
Living rills of sapphire clear,
Changing into water here!

Thus in my heart but now,
Most limpid Spring!
As on thy velvet sward I lay reclined,
Did Siren Fancy sing,
Rippling the quiet surface of the mind,
With the soft wavings of her azure wing;—
But I, too oft

As man and boy and child,
By her fair tales beguil'd,
Rather to thy low murmurs would attend,
Singing with thee His glory without end,
Who set thee on this grassy mound
To be a type to all around,
Of that perennial love which no abatement knows,
But still for ever on, still on for ever flows!

X.

A VISION OF ANIMALS.

Benedicite, omnes bestiæ et pecora, Domino.

Farewell to things material, void of sense,
Unchanging elements of earth and sky!
Welcome the breathing worlds,
Of fabric subtler far,
In which, O Life and Death, your mysteries dwell!
Creatures of blood,
With gifts unsearchable,
Sensations quick,
Instinct divine,
Likings, dislikings, pleasure, pain, endow'd.

Of such my vision was upon a day
In summer-tide, beneath the forest-boughs,
Listless reclin'd upon the perfum'd sward.

Endless the scenes,
Polar or tropical, that went and came,
Courting my vacant gaze;
Endless the tribes
Of bird and beast, which in those scenes appear'd.
While now Norwegia's pines,
Bending with weight of snow,
Now Cheviot's heathery hills before me lay,—
And now again, in undulations long,
The verdant prairies stretching far and wide,
Beyond the Western wave,—
Each with their busy races roaming wild.
Endless the scenes,—
Endless the climates,—endless, too, the praise
By their unnumber'd denizens outpour'd
To Him, their God unknown,
In whom they move and live.

I saw the cedars tall
Of which the Psalmist sings;
Glory of thy green haunts, O Lebanon!
I saw them cluster'd thick with various birds;—
Highest of all, the hern
Had pois'd her stormy nest.

Then glistening rose
A fair Pacific Isle,
With graceful ferns adorn'd, and scented shrubs;

Where, amid blossoms of a thousand dyes,
The joyous humming-birds,
More brightly tinted still,
Like gems upon the wing, their sport pursued,
Glancing from spray to spray,
Through the clear sunny ray,
In the full zest that springs of natural solitude.

Anon the eagle stands
High on a jutting crag,
That o'er the desert looks:
There I espied her, with her savage mate,
Their lofty eyry build;
There lay her eggs, and hatch her bristly brood—
No food has she at hand.
But lo, meanwhile,
From earth's far ends two hostile armies draw:—
Prescient of carrion near,
She for her starving nestlings feels no fear;
Soon all amid the slain are they,
Sucking the blood of kings!

The peacock next,
Fanning his goodly plumes,
His aureole display'd.
Upon a broken urn,
Relic of ancient days,
Graceful he stood, the rainbow amid birds!

Then came the mystic dove,
Her silvery feathers all bedropp'd with gold,
Sliding she came, down the smooth circling stair
Of yielding atmosphere, nor stirr'd a breath
With her becalmèd wing.

I look again;
And lo, 'tis all a void of blue expanse,—
A reach of azure sky,
Interminably spread!—
Then comes a sound of myriad beating wings,
And through the thin aerial solitudes,
An army strong,
The swallows voyage along;
In instinct's faith sublime,
Seeking another clime,
Not knowing whither bent, as he of olden time!
All in a rush I see them onward sweep—
Then from far down below,
Ascending slow,
Swells up the peal of the Atlantic deep!

Anon a beauteous range of mountain-tops
Courts my delighted gaze,
Where the wild goats are seen,
Feeding at will
Upon the ridges green,
Their pasturage of old;
While slowly sails the condor overhead.

Then on its tide,
Like a broad flowing stream,
The vision bore me on,
And brought me to an English homestead sweet,
Pictur'd on memory's page;
Where, in the yard,
Thick laid with wholesome straw,
I see four oxen stand,
Feeding at early dawn.
Hard by, the calf, responsive to its dam,
Lows from within the stall;
While, from half-open stable-door,
Pipes merrily the ploughboy's whistle shrill,
Mimic of blackbird's note.
Then forth the team is led,
Sleeky and slow; and, hardly past the gate,
Is met by our old shepherd and his son,
From midnight-watch
Returning, nipp'd and raw, their dog behind.

But ah! what sounds of fear
Are these that smite mine ear?
'Tis night—the moon is up—
And from the forest's dense obscurity,
In gusts are borne
Howlings of savage beasts, whose fiendish forms,
Betwixt the glimmering stems,
Glance by at intervals,

Fleetly careering
After their panting prey.
Trembling, I hear and see; but lo,
With the first streak of dawn,
Each to his den they wend;
Or fossil cave—or hollow of the pine—
Or ruin'd tower of eld;
And there, among their cubs
The spoil dividing, lay them down in peace!

Then in my sight a tufted palm-tree stood,
Shading a grassy track,
That by a tinkling rill its course pursued.
There, on the pathway green,
A dead man in his pool of blood is seen;—
The sunbeams twinkling with the twinkling leaves
Upon his face serene;—
A saddled ass is grazing at his side;—
And o'er him stands erect
And motionless the mighty forest-king;
His eye in secret fascination set;
His tail and shaggy mane
Rigid as bronze:—the sun is mounting high,
Yet there he stands
In the same place; nor hurteth ass nor man.

Fades the quick-shifting scene; and in its stead
A dungeon spreads its gloom;

Upon whose floor,
Noisome with human gore,
Sits holy Daniel, and feels no fear,
An Angel watching near ;—
While round and round, without a sound,
Lions and lions' whelps in ceaseless maze career.

Then lo, a wilderness,
Broken in jagged rocks, and all besprent
With prickly weeds ;—where horrid beasts of prey,
In the broad light of day,
Were roaming terrible as Satan's brood,
Tainting with noxious breath that awful solitude ;
And all amid the howling crew,
Victim of day's hot glare, and night's envenom'd dew,
One with a thorny crown
Appeareth, kneeling down !—
Ah ! wherefore kneels He there,
In fast and prayer ;—
Before eternity outstretch'd her wings,
Lord of lords, and King of kings !

Anon as from a vague abyss, up swam
Strange shadowy forms
Of mystic beasts by ancient Prophets seen.
He foremost, erst beheld on Chobar's margin green,
With fourfold wing and face, and living wheels between.

Then, as in th' Apocalypse, I stood
Upon a sandy shore;
And lo, a beast from out the ocean rose,—
Seven heads he had, ten horns,
And on each horn a crown,—
Leopard in form,
With lion's mouth, and paw of grisly bear.
I saw him mount upon th' horizon's edge,—
A dim and fearful thing;
I saw the nations darken in his shade.
Forthwith the serpent coils his slimy way,
Enormous stretch'd along
In folds without an end.
Then fiery coursers smote my sight;
And lo, Elias soars, rapt in his car of light!

XI.

A VISION OF WATERS.

Benedicite, maria et flumina, Domino.

Sitting within her secret vestibule
(Those windows clos'd through which the outward world
Admittance finds), this spirit saw pass by,
As on the sheeted surface of a wall,
In bright dissolving views, a lengthen'd train

Of scenes depicted in prismatic tints
By quick Imagination's vivid art;
Whereof a portion, reader, for thy sake
Shall here be told; the rest is gone from me,
Lost in oblivion's colourless abyss.

At first, a glimmering mist; then, purring soft
Within the secret chamber of mine ear,
A murmur as of distant ocean-waves.
Whereon the mist disparting, shows far down
A sea without a shore, o'er which the clouds
Are floating high, with veins of ruby tinge
Streaking the deep; while gently, here and there,
O'er tracts of open sunshine and of shade,
A thousand glistening billows rise and fall,—
The countless smile of ocean's solitude.

But see, what form is this
Which as a moving mountain breasts the waves,
Borne without mast or sail?
A ship, yet not a ship;
Rising in stories tier on tier,
And by a shadowy Hand
Guided upon its way.

Thus, as I gaze in wonderment, the clouds
Conglomerate into a murky black;
Down leaps the hurricane, up rise the waves,
Rattles the thunder round,—

Ocean and atmosphere are blent in one;
While towering waterspouts,
That each might sink a nation's armament,
In broad and foamy tracks
Stalk o'er the broken level of the main.
Ah, much I trembled then
For thee, O Ark, now nearer in my view;
For thee and for thy crew,—
That awful seed, sole remnant of a world,
The hope of bird and beast and mortal man.
I see thee toss'd upon the shiv'ring waves
Up to the clouds, then downward suck'd again
Into the sheer abyss; ofttimes from sight
Wholly withdrawn, unharm'd thou reappearest,
Upheaving a broad cataract of wave
From thine emerging roof. Around thee swarm
Spirits of darkness fresh from yawning hell,
Spurtling their fiery insatiate wrath
On thy defenceless head.
But all in vain; for still that Hand of might
(The same that on the Babylonian wall
Wrote at a later day)
Still o'er the trackless deep it thee upbears
Unerringly along,
Stemming the fearsome tide.
Long do I watch thy track,
And oft the rising and the setting sun
Salute my anxious gaze;

But still thy course is onward as before,
Nor swerves one point
From its predestin'd line.

At last, from heaven
Propitious calm descends, and swanlike sails
Over the ruffled deep;
All smooth the vast expanse
As a bright mirror lies, where lovely Peace
Might see her face and smile.
Onward, O sacred Ark, thou movest still;
Till on a little isle
Grounding at length, thou settlest rooted there;—
A little isle at first;
But all around the waters fast subside,
And soon into a mountain-peak it soars,
And lo, the Ark amid the skies is seen,
With a bright rainbow shining o'er its head,
While in the place of lately foaming waves
A slimy plain appears;
Slimy and dead, the ruins of a world!

Anon the scene is changed,
And other seas appear, and other times.

A mighty gulf,
Upon whose shore two hostile armies stand;
Then steps a chieftain forth, and with his rod

Smites the white crest of an advancing wave ;
Whereat the trembling deep asunder parts,
And a broad sandy path is seen
Betwixt the cloistering walls of waters green ;—
Enters the foremost army and arrives,
Safe on the further shore ;—
The second follows—and is seen no more !

Then rose a gentle lake
Before my wondering and delighted eye ;
A gentle lake with variegated shore
Of rocky promontory—landscape green—
Castles and towers and tranquil villages—
With palm-groves here and there
Fondling the quiet bays—
And in the midst of that same gentle lake,
A little ship with fishermen aboard,
And ONE, who lies asleep
Upon the pillow at the listless helm.
Sudden there bursts a storm
Spat from Satanic mouth,
And under whirling foam
The stricken bark is sinking, as I gaze ;
Then in their fear they wake that sleeping One,
And He forthwith arising, lifts His voice,
Which o'er the billows borne
Hushes them straight
Into an infant's rest.

I look again :—
The self-same lake is there,
Glistening beneath the moonbeam's silver shower ;
And lo, far out,
He, whom I saw but now, again appears,—
A solitary shape !
Striding across the fleet careering waves,
With the same ease
As on the green-sward of a quiet lawn !

Then for awhile no vision came, as though
Some curtain had been drawn ;
Patient I sit, and wait,—
When lo, a mass of many-mingled shades !
Which slowly breaking up, resolves itself
Into a second train of ocean-scenes,
Wherein the various tenants of the deep,
Before my curious gaze,
Their several parts perform.

I see the dolphin on the stormy wave
Taking his morning roll ;
I see the nautilus
Expand her sail of gauze,
And spread with mimic armaments the main.
I see leviathan with scales of pride
Stemming his hoary way.
All these and many more

Unwieldy sporting upon ocean's breast,
Or dwelling in its caves—
Or wandering restlessly from pole to pole,—
Before me pass along :
I mark their most exuberant joy of life,
I mark their pastimes strange,
And own in each a mystery divine.

Anon all calm and still
Before me lay the bottom of the deep
A region unexplor'd,—
Where never yet the storm was heard to rave,—
Stirless abode of solitude profound !
O'er whose white floor
Strange glistening shells were spread,
And gems without a name.
There, 'mid the bulky stems of seaweeds tall,
Whose ancient growth might antedate the flood,
With fear I saw
A mighty monster of an unknown fish,
Dozing and motionless,
Thy wond'rous work, O Lord !
Thick-ribb'd and strong he seem'd,
With skin more rugged than the corky rind ;
On whom no sooner had I fix'd my glance,
Than seems to shoot
An Angel down, and whisper in his ear.
Forthwith his fins strike out,

And, as an arrow from the bow, he darts
Upon his order'd course.

I mark him long through the clear underdepth
Sweep on his silent way;
Then suddenly to pause,
His destin'd goal attain'd,
And close beneath
The gently-rippling surface, tranquilly
His station taking wait the will divine.

Nor waits he long:
A storm is on the deep;
A straining ship draws nigh;
Toss'd from the deck,
The Prophet sinks amid engulfing waves;
Up springs the monster from his secret lair,
And down his ghastly jaws
Sucks his appointed prey.

Ah, then all hope was o'er
For thee, O Jonas, in thy fleshly tomb
Absorb'd without reprieve.
I see thee downward borne,
Downward and downward through the wat'ry maze;
Till on the bars thou touchest
Of this compacted globe.
Three days, three nights,

Thy home is in the deep;
Then at thy prayer, the Lord rememb'ring thee,
Sheer on the rocky strand
The monster casts thee forth,
And to his distant solitude returns.

Anon the scene is chang'd, and chang'd again;
Till last of all appears,
As at the first, a sea without a shore;
Gazing whereon, I hear a trumpet-blast
Peal from above. And lo, the ocean parts
Like a rent scroll, and through its yawning clefts
Up from their wat'ry graves in clouds arise
The multitudinous nations of the dead,
From age to age
Drown'd in the savage depth.
In clouds they rise,
Thick as autumnal mist;
Myriads on myriads borne.
Then comes insufferable darkness down,
And sits on the abyss;
And a voice cries, "There shall be sea no more!"
Whereat amid the black obscurity
I hear a formless sound as of the deep
Departing on its way:—then all is hush'd;
Silence and ancient chaos fill the void.

XII.

THE PAST.

Benedicite, noctes et dies, Domino.

O Time, thou creature strange,
Subtler than air,
Who all things dost pervade,
All things dost change,
And of the whole a record dost preserve,
Thyself unseen the while!
Lo, as from out the depths
Of some far eastern Archipelago
Uprises firm,
By toiling instinct rais'd
Of million million insects unobserv'd,
The fairy structure of some coral-isle,—
So thou, O Time,
From out eternal deeps
A wondrous world hast wrought,—
The fabric slow
Of million million moments unperceiv'd;
For every moment liv'd its tiny life,
Then solitary died,
And dying, left behind
Its fragment of the past;
Till upward, lo,

Emerging from th' abyss an isle appears,
Which, shooting transverse forth,
Is into grots and length'ning avenues
Of mystic cloisters grown.
Halls of the dead!
Halls of the Past and Gone!
Long corridors of years
Mantling the bosom of eternity!
Wherein we wander on at will,
Led by historic muse along,
And wonder at thy matchless skill,
Patient heart, and labour long;
Who o'er the level of th' eternal tide
Hast spread a labyrinth so vast and wide;
And built it up in such a wondrous way,
Working from age to age by night and day.
Nor built alone; but storied every wall
With all that did by day or night befall.
O history sublime!
O matchless Book of Time!
What deeds untold
Upon thy pictur'd page are here enroll'd!
O dim archives of vanish'd nights and days,
What solemn thoughts ye raise
In those who wander your lone aisles along!
A twilight scene
O'ergrown with ivy green,
Where scarce a trembling ray can shoot between,

Fit place for my sad song;
For I would sing
Of ev'ry earthly thing,
How speedily it verges to its close.
How all our hopes and fears,
Our smiles and tears,
Thoughts, words, and deeds,
With all that thence proceeds,
And all that thither flows,
O Time, alas!
Into thy mirror pass,
In a strange ceaseless flux which none may stay;
And there remain,
For glory or for bane,
Irrevocably stamp'd until the Judgment Day!

XIII.

THE SOUL.

Benedicite, spiritus et animæ justorum Domino.

Of God, of Truth, of high celestial things,
Methought one night I heard
The Angel Watchers singing to themselves;
Then sudden chang'd the strain,
And took a mournful tone;

As of the soul they sang :—
Her origin sublime ;
How nobler far than elemental fire,
Or air, or sea, or first-created light !
Or immaterial principle unknown
Of the brute race, or instinct's force divine,
Or comet's wheeling orb,
Or sun, or blazing star !
She boasts a heav'nly birth,
A life immortal, incorruptible,
From the pure fontal essence everblest
Of Majesty ineffable deriv'd.
O shame, to think that such a pearl of price
Should all unvalued to the swine be cast
By thankless mortal man !

And marvellously was her nature fram'd,
And still a wonder is,
With awful powers endow'd ;—
Conscience supreme !
Clear Intellect, and Fancy's airy wand !
Exhaustless Memory !
Skill, and inventive power !
Capacious Science which subdues the world !
Pity soft-ey'd ! angelic Sympathies
In boundless treasure stor'd !
Genius sublime !
Thought, Eloquence, Freewill !

"O marvel of the world!" (so went the song)
"Great miracle of majesty divine!
Image of God, of Angels the high charge!
Bright ray of Heav'n piercing this lower deep!
Wherefore so dull become, ethereal soul!
Dost thou no longer shine; but, soil'd and dim,
Trailest in dust, the prey of earthly things?
Ah, well may nature weep
For thee, her highest crown, so lowly laid!
Ah, well for thee
May Angels mourn, and all creation sigh!"

Then of Eternity
The hidden warblers sang,
Whereat a joyous burst throughout the concave rang;
Anon 'twas sadness all,
Telling of Adam's fall,
Telling of sin and death which us thereby enthral.

XIV.

THE ANGELS.

Benedicite, Angeli Domini, Domino.

What honour hast Thou given
To these sweet Sons of Heav'n,
Whom for Thyself, O Lord, Thou didst create?

What mercies hast Thou shown,
Sending them hither down
From age to age
On gracious pilgrimage;
Till Thou Thyself didst come in our estate:
Then upon Thee it was their joy to wait!

Oft as on them I muse,
Revive those pictures bright,
My infancy's delight,
In ancient Bible cunningly portray'd;
Which in transparent vivid hues
Their past appearances from age to age display'd.—

Now Jacob, pillow'd on his stone,
While Angels o'er his head,
By light from moonbeams shed,
On crystal stair are wending up and down.
Now Peter, on his prison-floor,
At the mid hour of night
Woke by an Angel bright,
To whom without a touch opens the iron door.
Anon before my gaze
The sheepfolds lie, all bath'd in heavenly rays;
While the hymn of Christ's glad birth,
Joy in Heav'n and peace on earth,
As once of old it downward stole,
Sings in mine ear, and sinks into my soul.

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Then, all in mists of gray
Fading away,
The vision changes to a mantling gloom,
And shows the dim interior of a tomb;
Where on a stone
Two Angels sit alone,
Watching the hallow'd spot where Christ was laid,
When He for human guilt the bloody price had paid.
Risen and free,
Himself I cannot see;
Before mine eyes
Folded apart the sacred napkin lies.
Ah me, how still they sit,
While silently before the flooding Morn
Night's shadows flit!
One at the head, the other at the feet,
Like Cherubim of old beside the mercy-seat!

XV.

THE WORLD.

Benedicite, filii hominum, Domino.

O WORLD, which evermore
As in a swollen river's turbid tide
Dost on and onward roll,

How long, how long
Shalt thou yet flow?
How long the sons of Eve
Into Hell's dismal ocean shalt thou sweep,
An unresisting throng?
Oh stream, augmenting ever by our loss,
Which hardly they escape who climb the Cross!

As one who, on a rock
That o'er the rising Danube looks afar,
Planting his steady foot,
Beneath him views the broad uproarious flood
Resistless whirling its tumultuous prey;
So to the table-land
Of this calm solitude retir'd awhile,
I, rais'd above myself,
Seem from its sylvan height
Thee to behold, O world, far down below;
With all thy pomps and specious vanities,
In eddies borne along without an end,
An evanescent scene:—

Cities in whirlpools sweeping;
Unnumber'd armies from all nations pour'd;
Wharfs pil'd with merchandise;
Kings' palaces in marble terrac'd high;
Fountains and glitt'ring domes;
Castles and forts

Bristling with cannons' teeth ;
Huge heaps of gold,
Prisons and theatres, vast crowds of men ;—
All these and many more,
Life's phantom masquerade,
Beneath my gaze in mazy circles speed.

See in procession long
The Pagan world go by,—
Baal and Astaroth and Remmon's car,
With music wild, and shouts of drunken joy ;
Assyria, Media, Persia, Babylon,
Egypt, and ancient Thebes.

Ah me, what hideous rites !
What fearful orgies drench'd in human blood,
Man's blood in hellish sacrifice outpour'd !

Such things I saw, and seeing, knew the world
For an apostate from its Maker's creed,
Though stamp'd on its own heart,
And writ on nature's brow.
Anon came whirling by old Greece and Rome,
With all their arts sublime ;
Still far from Thee, O Lord.
Beauty their idol ; her in countless forms
Their pleasure to adore ;
Spurning her Author and first Origin,
Sensual their deeds, with a false glory crown'd.

Long was the train
That follow'd in their wake. Then seem'd the globe
To spin upon its axis as I gaz'd;
While land and sea, together blent in one,
As a broad ribbon show'd. So quickly time
Cours'd on its way. Anon 'twas darkness all;
Which, presently dispersing, usher'd in
The light of modern days,—
The light of Intellect, false reason's ray!
Upward from earth it came,
Not downwards from on high:
And lo, beneath its pale and haggard beam
Sweeps roisterous along
A democratic rout;
Uproar and anarchy set loose from chains.
O woe was me, what blasphemies I mark'd!
Science run mad;
Mammon in triumph borne;
And nature's law set up in place of God.
Methought the end was near;
That surely Antichrist must now appear.

Vanish'd the rabble rout in distance far,
Borne on thy stream, O world;
And now before me swam all pleasant things,—
Mansions and fragrant groves;
Arcadian lawns
With groups of dancers fill'd;

Banquets in halls of state;
Bright throngs of revellers, enchanting forms
Of youth and beauty, music's joyous bands,
All sweets of this vain world,
All pleasures, glories, riches, dignities.
And ever as I gaz'd, within me rose
A yearning strange and most insatiable,
A yearning and an emptiness profound,
Which naught of all I there beheld could fill.
"O foolish heart," I thought, "that ever once
You could have dreamt to find in these your rest!
All in a restless scene;
All amid phantom things
That come and go, and go and come again,—
Fata morgana of this fleeting world!
Poor shreds of time, while thou eternal art!
Adieu, adieu,
Illusive pageantry!
Adieu, adieu,
False fleeting airy show!
Speed on thy way, and with insidious smile
Thy wretched victims into ruin sweep;
But I, thy treacheries taught
By sad experience, spurn thee from my breast,
And thy allegiance evermore renounce,
Insensate, heartless, empty, perjur'd world!"

Such were the thoughts, O Solitude divine,
Which, as I sat upon thy mountain height,

Smites the white crest of an advancing wave ;
Whereat the trembling deep asunder parts,
And a broad sandy path is seen
Betwixt the cloistering walls of waters green ;—
Enters the foremost army and arrives,
Safe on the further shore ;—
The second follows—and is seen no more !

Then rose a gentle lake
Before my wondering and delighted eye ;
A gentle lake with variegated shore
Of rocky promontory—landscape green—
Castles and towers and tranquil villages—
With palm-groves here and there
Fondling the quiet bays—
And in the midst of that same gentle lake,
A little ship with fishermen aboard,
And One, who lies asleep
Upon the pillow at the listless helm.
Sudden there bursts a storm
Spat from Satanic mouth,
And under whirling foam
The stricken bark is sinking, as I gaze ;
Then in their fear they wake that sleeping One,
And He forthwith arising, lifts His voice,
Which o'er the billows borne
Hushes them straight
Into an infant's rest.

I look again :—
The self-same lake is there,
Glistening beneath the moonbeam's silver shower ;
And lo, far out,
He, whom I saw but now, again appears,—
A solitary shape !
Striding across the fleet careering waves,
With the same ease
As on the green-sward of a quiet lawn !

Then for awhile no vision came, as though
Some curtain had been drawn ;
Patient I sit, and wait,—
When lo, a mass of many-mingled shades !
Which slowly breaking up, resolves itself
Into a second train of ocean-scenes,
Wherein the various tenants of the deep,
Before my curious gaze,
Their several parts perform.

I see the dolphin on the stormy wave
Taking his morning roll ;
I see the nautilus
Expand her sail of gauze,
And spread with mimic armaments the main.
I see leviathan with scales of pride
Stemming his hoary way.
All these and many more

Unwieldy sporting upon ocean's breast,
Or dwelling in its caves—
Or wandering restlessly from pole to pole,—
Before me pass along :
I mark their most exuberant joy of life,
I mark their pastimes strange,
And own in each a mystery divine.

Anon all calm and still
Before me lay the bottom of the deep
A region unexplor'd,—
Where never yet the storm was heard to rave,—
Stirless abode of solitude profound !
O'er whose white floor
Strange glistening shells were spread,
And gems without a name.
There, 'mid the bulky stems of seaweeds tall,
Whose ancient growth might antedate the flood,
With fear I saw
A mighty monster of an unknown fish,
Dozing and motionless,
Thy wond'rous work, O Lord !
Thick-ribb'd and strong he seem'd,
With skin more rugged than the corky rind ;
On whom no sooner had I fix'd my glance,
Than seems to shoot
An Angel down, and whisper in his ear.
Forthwith his fins strike out,

And, as an arrow from the bow, he darts
Upon his order'd course.

I mark him long through the clear underdepth
Sweep on his silent way;
Then suddenly to pause,
His destin'd goal attain'd,
And close beneath
The gently-rippling surface, tranquilly
His station taking wait the will divine.

Nor waits he long:
A storm is on the deep;
A straining ship draws nigh;
Toss'd from the deck,
The Prophet sinks amid engulfing waves;
Up springs the monster from his secret lair,
And down his ghastly jaws
Sucks his appointed prey.

Ah, then all hope was o'er
For thee, O Jonas, in thy fleshly tomb
Absorb'd without reprieve.
I see thee downward borne,
Downward and downward through the wat'ry maze;
Till on the bars thou touchest
Of this compacted globe.
Three days, three nights,

Thy home is in the deep;
Then at thy prayer, the Lord rememb'ring thee,
Sheer on the rocky strand
The monster casts thee forth,
And to his distant solitude returns.

Anon the scene is chang'd, and chang'd again;
Till last of all appears,
As at the first, a sea without a shore;
Gazing whereon, I hear a trumpet-blast
Peal from above. And lo, the ocean parts
Like a rent scroll, and through its yawning clefts
Up from their wat'ry graves in clouds arise
The multitudinous nations of the dead,
From age to age
Drown'd in the savage depth.
In clouds they rise,
Thick as autumnal mist;
Myriads on myriads borne.
Then comes insufferable darkness down,
And sits on the abyss;
And a voice cries, "There shall be sea no more!"
Whereat amid the black obscurity
I hear a formless sound as of the deep
Departing on its way:—then all is hush'd;
Silence and ancient chaos fill the void.

XII.

THE PAST.

Benedicite, noctes et dies, Domino.

O Time, thou creature strange,
Subtler than air,
Who all things dost pervade,
All things dost change,
And of the whole a record dost preserve,
Thyself unseen the while!
Lo, as from out the depths
Of some far eastern Archipelago
Uprises firm,
By toiling instinct rais'd
Of million million insects unobserv'd,
The fairy structure of some coral-isle,—
So thou, O Time,
From out eternal deeps
A wondrous world hast wrought,—
The fabric slow
Of million million moments unperceiv'd;
For every moment liv'd its tiny life,
Then solitary died,
And dying, left behind
Its fragment of the past;
Till upward, lo,

Emerging from th' abyss an isle appears,
Which, shooting transverse forth,
Is into grots and length'ning avenues
Of mystic cloisters grown.
Halls of the dead!
Halls of the Past and Gone!
Long corridors of years
Mantling the bosom of eternity!
Wherein we wander on at will,
Led by historic muse along,
And wonder at thy matchless skill,
Patient heart, and labour long;
Who o'er the level of th' eternal tide
Hast spread a labyrinth so vast and wide;
And built it up in such a wondrous way,
Working from age to age by night and day.
Nor built alone; but storied every wall
With all that did by day or night befall.
O history sublime!
O matchless Book of Time!
What deeds untold
Upon thy pictur'd page are here enroll'd!
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In those who wander your lone aisles along!
A twilight scene
O'ergrown with ivy green,
Where scarce a trembling ray can shoot between,

Fit place for my sad song;
For I would sing
Of ev'ry earthly thing,
How speedily it verges to its close.
How all our hopes and fears,
Our smiles and tears,
Thoughts, words, and deeds,
With all that thence proceeds,
And all that thither flows,
O Time, alas!
Into thy mirror pass,
In a strange ceaseless flux which none may stay;
And there remain,
For glory or for bane,
Irrevocably stamp'd until the Judgment Day!

XIII.

THE SOUL.

Benedicite, spiritus et animæ justorum Domino.

Of God, of Truth, of high celestial things,
Methought one night I heard
The Angel Watchers singing to themselves;
Then sudden chang'd the strain,
And took a mournful tone;

As of the soul they sang :—
Her origin sublime ;
How nobler far than elemental fire,
Or air, or sea, or first-created light !
Or immaterial principle unknown
Of the brute race, or instinct's force divine,
Or comet's wheeling orb,
Or sun, or blazing star !
She boasts a heav'nly birth,
A life immortal, incorruptible,
From the pure fontal essence everblest
Of Majesty ineffable deriv'd.
O shame, to think that such a pearl of price
Should all unvalued to the swine be cast
By thankless mortal man !

And marvellously was her nature fram'd,
And still a wonder is,
With awful powers endow'd ;—
Conscience supreme !
Clear Intellect, and Fancy's airy wand !
Exhaustless Memory !
Skill, and inventive power !
Capacious Science which subdues the world !
Pity soft-ey'd ! angelic Sympathies
In boundless treasure stor'd !
Genius sublime !
Thought, Eloquence, Freewill !

"O marvel of the world!" (so went the song)
"Great miracle of majesty divine!
Image of God, of Angels the high charge!
Bright ray of Heav'n piercing this lower deep!
Wherefore so dull become, ethereal soul!
Dost thou no longer shine; but, soil'd and dim,
Trailest in dust, the prey of earthly things?
Ah, well may nature weep
For thee, her highest crown, so lowly laid!
Ah, well for thee
May Angels mourn, and all creation sigh!"

Then of Eternity
The hidden warblers sang,
Whereat a joyous burst throughout the concave rang;
Anon 'twas sadness all,
Telling of Adam's fall,
Telling of sin and death which us thereby enthral.

XIV.

THE ANGELS.

Benedicite, Angeli Domini, Domino.

What honour hast Thou given
To these sweet Sons of Heav'n,
Whom for Thyself, O Lord, Thou didst create?

What mercies hast Thou shown,
Sending them hither down
From age to age
On gracious pilgrimage;
Till Thou Thyself didst come in our estate:
Then upon Thee it was their joy to wait!

Oft as on them I muse,
Revive those pictures bright,
My infancy's delight,
In ancient Bible cunningly portray'd;
Which in transparent vivid hues
Their past appearances from age to age display'd.—

Now Jacob, pillow'd on his stone,
While Angels o'er his head,
By light from moonbeams shed,
On crystal stair are wending up and down.
Now Peter, on his prison-floor,
At the mid hour of night
Woke by an Angel bright,
To whom without a touch opens the iron door.
Anon before my gaze
The sheepfolds lie, all bath'd in heavenly rays;
While the hymn of Christ's glad birth,
Joy in Heav'n and peace on earth,
As once of old it downward stole,
Sings in mine ear, and sinks into my soul.

Then, all in mists of gray
Fading away,
The vision changes to a mantling gloom,
And shows the dim interior of a tomb;
Where on a stone
Two Angels sit alone,
Watching the hallow'd spot where Christ was laid,
When He for human guilt the bloody price had paid.
Risen and free,
Himself I cannot see;
Before mine eyes
Folded apart the sacred napkin lies.
Ah me, how still they sit,
While silently before the flooding Morn
Night's shadows flit!
One at the head, the other at the feet,
Like Cherubim of old beside the mercy-seat!

XV.

THE WORLD.

Benedicite, filii hominum, Domino.

O WORLD, which evermore
As in a swollen river's turbid tide
Dost on and onward roll,

How long, how long
Shalt thou yet flow?
How long the sons of Eve
Into Hell's dismal ocean shalt thou sweep,
An unresisting throng?
Oh stream, augmenting ever by our loss,
Which hardly they escape who climb the Cross!

As one who, on a rock
That o'er the rising Danube looks afar,
Planting his steady foot,
Beneath him views the broad uproarious flood
Resistless whirling its tumultuous prey;
So to the table-land
Of this calm solitude retir'd awhile,
I, rais'd above myself,
Seem from its sylvan height
Thee to behold, O world, far down below;
With all thy pomps and specious vanities,
In eddies borne along without an end,
An evanescent scene:—

Cities in whirlpools sweeping;
Unnumber'd armies from all nations pour'd;
Wharfs pil'd with merchandise;
Kings' palaces in marble terrac'd high;
Fountains and glitt'ring domes;
Castles and forts

Bristling with cannons' teeth;
Huge heaps of gold,
Prisons and theatres, vast crowds of men;—
All these and many more,
Life's phantom masquerade,
Beneath my gaze in mazy circles speed.

See in procession long
The Pagan world go by,—
Baal and Astaroth and Remmon's car,
With music wild, and shouts of drunken joy;
Assyria, Media, Persia, Babylon,
Egypt, and ancient Thebes.

Ah me, what hideous rites!
What fearful orgies drench'd in human blood,
Man's blood in hellish sacrifice outpour'd!

Such things I saw, and seeing, knew the world
For an apostate from its Maker's creed,
Though stamp'd on its own heart,
And writ on nature's brow.
Anon came whirling by old Greece and Rome,
With all their arts sublime;
Still far from Thee, O Lord.
Beauty their idol; her in countless forms
Their pleasure to adore;
Spurning her Author and first Origin,
Sensual their deeds, with a false glory crown'd.

Long was the train
That follow'd in their wake. Then seem'd the globe
To spin upon its axis as I gaz'd;
While land and sea, together blent in one,
As a broad ribbon show'd. So quickly time
Cours'd on its way. Anon 'twas darkness all;
Which, presently dispersing, usher'd in
The light of modern days,—
The light of Intellect, false reason's ray!
Upward from earth it came,
Not downwards from on high:
And lo, beneath its pale and haggard beam
Sweeps roisterous along
A democratic rout;
Uproar and anarchy set loose from chains.
O woe was me, what blasphemies I mark'd!
Science run mad;
Mammon in triumph borne;
And nature's law set up in place of God.
Methought the end was near;
That surely Antichrist must now appear.

Vanish'd the rabble rout in distance far,
Borne on thy stream, O world;
And now before me swam all pleasant things,—
Mansions and fragrant groves;
Arcadian lawns
With groups of dancers fill'd;

Banquets in halls of state;
Bright throngs of revellers, enchanting forms
Of youth and beauty, music's joyous bands,
All sweets of this vain world,
All pleasures, glories, riches, dignities.
And ever as I gaz'd, within me rose
A yearning strange and most insatiable,
A yearning and an emptiness profound,
Which naught of all I there beheld could fill.
"O foolish heart," I thought, "that ever once
You could have dreamt to find in these your rest!
All in a restless scene;
All amid phantom things
That come and go, and go and come again,—
Fata morgana of this fleeting world!
Poor shreds of time, while thou eternal art!
Adieu, adieu,
Illusive pageantry!
Adieu, adieu,
False fleeting airy show!
Speed on thy way, and with insidious smile
Thy wretched victims into ruin sweep;
But I, thy treacheries taught
By sad experience, spurn thee from my breast,
And thy allegiance evermore renounce,
Insensate, heartless, empty, perjur'd world!"

Such were the thoughts, O Solitude divine,
Which, as I sat upon thy mountain height,

Beneath a cloister of umbrageous pine,
Upon me stole, what time before my sight
The mists of eve were passing in review,
Marshall'd far down the vale. Meanwhile the moon,
Pale-glistening with a solemn-tinted hue,
Above the forest lifted her fair head;
Faded away the sunset-dyes, and soon,
Dim spreading to the far horizon's verge
'Twas twilight all. Then in melodious swell,
Inviting requiems for the faithful dead,
Came floatingly, like some aerial dirge,
The peal of ancient monastery bell,
Rising and falling soft o'er distant flood and fell.

XVI.

THE SANCTUARY OF THE CHURCH.

Benedicat Israel Dominum, laudet et superexaltet eum in sæcula.

Farewell, a long farewell,
Ye pomps and vanities of this false world,
Vain-glorious systems and perverted ways!
Welcome, ye shades serene,
As by some heavenly screen
Shut off from earth and earthlings' empty gaze!

Welcome, true Israel,
Where peace and justice dwell;
Where in low cloister'd cell,
Remote from scenes of pride,
Faith, Hope, and Love may hide;
Where prayer and praise are pealing evermore,
While through the spacious ever-open door,
In distance view'd,
Appear th' eternal hills, glist'ning and golden-hued!
Welcome, thou Church sublime,
Founded from olden time,
Far out upon the world's tempestuous tide;
Which surging all around,
Stirs not the rock profound,
Rooted whereon thou dost from age to age abide!

O place most blest,
Foretaste of Heaven's own rest!
Port where no billow rolls!
True home of human souls!
O Sanctuary rare of all creation,
Worthy of endless praise and admiration!
How oft thy glorious aisles along
Vibrating with ecstatic song,
Lost in Elysian dreams, I glide,
Forgetful of all else beside;
Seeking with Jesus there to meet,
And cast me down before His feet.

How oft amid thy cloisters dim
I seem to walk alone with Him,
Marking His every word and deed,
Of which in Holy Writ we read,
In living colours ever new
Set before th' entrancèd view!
O place most bright,
O'erflooded from the Fount of living Light!
O place most sweet,
For gentlest musings meet,
And whispering with the tread of sainted feet!
O place of pure repose,
Which the world never knows;
Where peace and penitence their joys disclose;
Where whatsoever good was lost before
Is found again, and found for evermore!
All hail, new world of grace,
That fillest up the space
From man to Angel in th' ascent of things!
Hail, sacred palace of the King of kings!
Great mystery from generations hid,
Outdating Egypt's oldest pyramid;
Chantry kept secret since the world began,
In silent darkness seal'd;
But now, according to th' eternal plan,
To Faith reveal'd!
Ah, what a waft divine
Steals from thy inner shrine,

As with hush'd step I draw me near!
Ah, what a gently-breathing calm is here,
Dropping around
Like dew upon the ground,
Soothing the soul with hope, and scattering all her fear!

O, where true peace and rest,
Where an untroubled breast,
Save here with Thee, O Jesu, shall I find?
Here in Thy living Church of ancient days,
Which, all amid the world's quick-shifting maze,
Thou hast on Peter built, a refuge for mankind!
Here are Thy servants found;
Here do Thy praises sound,
Mounting above the world's tumultuous roar;
Here man with angel vies,
And earth with skies,
Thee, Father, Son, and Spirit, to adore!

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

I.

ON HEARING THE NIGHTINGALE SING IN THE DAY-TIME.

Sweet bird, enchantress of the earth!
Born in the world's young prime!
The only bird of Eden birth,
Left to this latter time!

Why on the sunny laughing day
Thy golden voice expend?
To lonely night belongs thy lay;
Save thee, she has no friend.

The day, it has a thousand songs,
Of leaflet, bird, and bee;
The merry bell to the day belongs;—
The night—it has but thee!

Then for sad solitary night
Reserve thy downy lay;
And she to thee for this delight,
Full many thanks will pay.

Listening all still, o'er vale and hill,
While from some copsewood tree,
Thou with charm'd trill, the air dost fill,
Blending all things in thee.

II.

EVENING.

Now eve descends in meek array,
More welcome than the gaudy day;
The clouds forsake the upper sky,
To settle on some mountain high;
Or round the Sunset's crimson close
In variegated piles repose.

Faint, more faint, and fainter still,
Stealing on o'er vale and hill,
The chimes from distant turret gray
Into silence fade away.
The hamlet swarms with rustic poor,
At gossip by the cottage-door;
Guided by little urchin strong,
Homeward creeps the team along;

The children, heedless to be seen,
Bathe in the pond upon the green;
Whence along their beaten track
March the geese in order back.
From the cot beside the oak
Mounts a slender thread of smoke,
Telling with what thrifty care
Its two old dames their meal prepare;
While from open lattice nigh
Notes of village harmony,
Meeting in a cadence clear,
Catch the idly listening ear.

Now then the pensive task be mine,
As into dusk the tints decline,
In meditative mood to stray
Along some brier-scented way;
Where, perch'd beside her leafy nest,
The linnet trills her young to rest.
There let me muse, all else forgot,
On the strange tide of human lot;
How brief the measure of our day;
On death's approach, on life's decay;
On former times, on future things;
On all our vain imaginings;—
Till over fading lawn and mead
Their silver net the dews have spread;
And the pale glow-worm shows her light,
To guide me home at fall of night.

III.

SPRING.

Come, Spring, O come;
And loiter not so long
In distant Southern isles,
Or in the glens of Araby the Blest.

Come, Spring, O come;
For I am sick at heart
Of the dull winter's length,
And yearn to see thy cheerful face again.

On the fresh blade
Glistens the rime of morn,
Waiting for thee to come,
And with thy breath exhale it to the skies.

For thee the bud
Its fragile form unfolds;
And opening film by film,
Spreads to the tempting air its leaf of gauze.

The lamb for thee,
Thrilling with young delight,
Skips through the fleecy fold
On the warm slope of many a sunny vale;

While near at hand,
From hedgerows faintly green,
To frequent bleatings shrill,
The newly-mating birds in songs reply.

Then from afar
Once more appear, O Spring,
Breathing most odorous sweets,
With robe of violet and lily crown.

Once more appear,
Enchantress of the world!
Who with sweet siren voice
Lullest the harsh notes of the wint'ry gale.

So at thy call
All nature shall revive,
And grateful, o'er thy head,
Strew the white blossoms of the early year.

IV.

AUTUMN.

As late I stood a sluggish brook beside,
Wherein from rustling alders dropping fast,
Floated the leaves that were poor Summer's pride,
But now to reckless winds aside were cast,—

A hoary-headed Hermit I espied,
Sitting where o'er the stream an aspen hung:
His robe with divers gaudy tints was dy'd,
And his glaz'd eye upon the brook was flung,
As musing deep he seem'd the fading groves among.

Anon he steps him forth with solemn tread,
While round his feet strange mournful music rose;
And from the woods a dirge, as of the dead,
Came fitfully, lamenting Summer's close.
Meanwhile the gossamers began o'erhead
From branch to branch their airy woof to ply;
And from the ground a sickly vapour spread,
That slowly floating up shut out the sky,
Draping o'er nature's bier a funeral canopy!

V.

ASSOCIATIONS WITH PLACES.

'Tis strange to think on this green earth
How many spots there be,
Mementoes dear of grief or mirth,
Unknown to you or me!

The grot, the glen, the old gray tower,
Gaily we saunter by,
Where ofttimes in a pensive hour
Another stops to sigh.

Each object speaks, if all were known,
Heard by none else beside,
To some one heart in solemn tone,
Recalling what has died.

Thus wide and far, o'er isle and main,
Uncounted memories dwell
Of tears, of guilt, of love, of pain,
Far more than we can tell.

O, let us tread with thoughts profound
Where'er our path may be;
All earth is consecrated ground
To him who thinks with me!

VI.

ECHO.

Echo, wild elf,
Who in deep hermit-glen,
Where through o'er-foliag'd cleft the brooklet steals,
A sylvan life dost lead!

Or in high dome,
Symphonious with the choir,
From thy calm realm wide arching overhead,
Answerest in angel-strains!

Thee in some grot,
Far down primeval time,
From noise of heaving chaos deep retir'd,
Did Silence bring to birth;

There nurs'd thee up
Beneath a radiant roof,
Where sparkled thick innumerable gems,
The storehouse of a world!

Whence still thy voice,
Most heard in lonely scenes,
Flies from the common haunt, from business rude,
And the coarse hum of men.

O, that with thee
I, too, apart might dwell;
Nor to the traffic of the world consign'd,
Invert the ends of life!

VII.

ON AN ANCIENT STONE-QUARRY.

Know, visitor, that from this spot obscure,
So hid from human gaze,
Whither scarce once a year, across the moor,
A lonely shepherd strays,—

In olden time, far off beyond the seas,
A vast Cathedral rose,
Whose fame extends to earth's extremities,
And still with ages grows.

The stones, that here in darkness would have lain,
There pil'd in glorious state,
Up to the skies, the fretted roof sustain,
Majestically great;

Or carv'd in many a mystical device,
And forms of Saints on high,
In glory ever new, bring Paradise
Before th' astonish'd eye.

Such power hath God for His eternal ends
To human genius given;—
Genius sublime! by which the mind ascends
In Him from earth to heaven!

So, at His will and bountiful decree,
From low obscurest things,
In everlasting truth and harmony,
Celestial beauty springs.

E'en as at first, from the rude formless mass
Of earth's chaotic frame,
This fair creation, at His word of grace,
In perfect order came.

VIII.

NATURE'S MYSTERIES.

Nature! deign to drop thy veil,
For a little moment's space;
Well I know, its folds conceal
Many a miracle of grace.

Well I know, that deep within,
Move in a mysterious scheme,
Things immortal, things divine,—
Fairer than the heart can dream.

O, might I but look behind,
What a blaze of glory bright,
In thy hidden depth enshrin'd,
Would confound my dazzled sight!

Substances of beauty rare,
Unconceiv'd by human thought,
Whence, as in a tissue fair,
All that we behold is wrought!

Living light, in ebb and flow!
Paradisal imagery!
Angels glancing to and fro
In the clear transparency!

Ah, if nature's outward dress
Is so beauteous, as we see;
What must not the beauteousness
Of its inner glory be!

IX.

A DREAM OF CHILDHOOD.

I HAD a dream when I was young,
It was a mystery to me,
And ever to my heart has clung
Its most enchanting memory.

I stood a little lake beside,
With roses fring'd, as silver bright;
Above me Angels seem'd to glide,
All in a strangely liquid light.

When suddenly there thrill'd me through
A sound more sweet than I can name,
Unheard before, but well I knew
That from those angel forms it came.

They caught me up, they bore me high,
Softly their wings enwrapp'd me o'er;
Strange things they show'd me in the sky,—
Things I had never guess'd before.

Then first I saw how little earth
Can with eternal worlds compare;
Then first I felt my higher birth
Than beasts on land, or birds in air.

O joy of joys! I seem'd to fly;
I seem'd at Heav'n's own gate to be;
The Seraphs chanting through the sky
Amidst their songs enseraph'd me.

I woke;—the bells were chiming clear,
Waking I strove to dream again;
But then, and since from year to year,
I've sought for that sweet dream in vain.

O sunny hours of life's young light!
O season blest of man's brief day!
When in the dreams of morning bright
Angels can steal the soul away!

Would that again by grace divine
My soul were fit such things to see!
Gladly for this would I resign
All that the world has brought to me.

X.

ON PASSING BY A FORMER HOME ON A RAILWAY.

All on a road of iron strong,
Behind our iron steed,
Old England's verdant length along
We swept with fiery speed.

O, drear to me was that long day,
And wearisome the din;
No village cheer'd the lifeless way,
My heart fell dead within.

When suddenly there burst on me
A spot well known of yore;
A spot I had not dreamt to see,—
A moment seen and o'er!

Within a little nook it lay,—
Garden and house and lawn,
Beeches and brook and steeple gray,
That saw my boyhood's dawn.

O blest abode, to your sweet shade
How did my spirit spring;
Counting the gulf that time had made
A momentary thing!

And ringing back life's changes all,
Till far away I heard
The chimes of early childhood call,
Like to a mocking-bird.

O blest abode, like some deep thought,
A moment felt and o'er,
As though Eternity it brought,
Then left us as before!

Farewell, farewell! the world sweeps by,
And I with it must go;
But I'll return before I die,
If God shall grant it so.

XI.

SUMMER'S DEPARTURE.

The glory of Summer
Is faded and fled;
The wreaths that adorn'd her
Are dying or dead;
The Autumn is coming,
And strong in his blast,
Will open to Winter
A passage at last.

O, how to my spirit
It seemeth to say,—
"Thus, too, is thy Summer
Fast fleeting away;
And the things which thou lovest,
Though pleasant they be,
And the friends thou hast chosen,
Are fading with thee.

Dost thou covet a Summer
More certain of bliss?—
Go seek thee a country
Far brighter than this;
Where the joys thou hast lost
Thou shalt never deplore,
And the friends thou hast chosen
Shall quit thee no more."

XII.

ON A SELFISH RETIREMENT.

How many souls of strongest powers
To selfish solitude consign'd,
Have whil'd in idleness their hours,
Nor nobly sought to serve mankind!

Them, nor a widow'd nation's cries,
  Nor blood of freedom largely shed,
Nor saintly martyr's dying sighs,
  From their false dream of quiet led.

Listless beneath o'er-arching trees,
  They watch'd the birds attune their song,
Or gather'd music from the breeze,
  Or mark'd the streamlet glide along.

But not to such the Muse may give
  The wreath that stirs a Patriot's pride;
Since for themselves content to live,
  So for themselves alone they died.

Happy the man who for his God
  Has left the world and all its ways,
To tread the path that Saints have trod,
  And spend his life in prayer and praise:

Unhappy, who himself to please
  Forsakes the path where duty lies,
Either in love of selfish ease,
  Or in contempt of human ties.

In vain have they the world resign'd
  Who only seek an earthly rest;
Nor to the soul that spurns mankind
  Can even solitude be blest.

XIII.

A VILLAGE INCIDENT.

I KNOW a man of many years,
Full ninety years and more,
On Summer-noons he oft appears
Outside his cottage-door.

And there with palsied hand will he
Sit knitting in the shade;
O, 'tis a curious sight to see
That old man at his trade.

In Winter by his chimney hole
He spends the livelong day,
With now and then a passing dole
From those who go that way.

For he is known the parish round,
And all the neighbourhood o'er;
And there has liv'd on that same ground
For ninety years and more.

No child has he, they all are gone,
And rest them in a row;
Last week he buried a younger son,
With hair as white as snow.

In his old prayer-book at the end,
Their ages you may see;
That prayer-book is his oldest friend,
And twice as old as he.

But yesterday I pass'd that way,
And miss'd him from his chair;
I saw that in distress he lay,
And gave what I could spare.

Then lifting up his clear blue eye,
With trembling voice he cried,
"May you be bless'd by God on high,
And Christ the crucified!"

O words of comfort, how did they
My heart with rapture fill!
And ever since, do what I may,
I seem to hear them still.

And ever to myself I sing
With a deep inward glee,
"Old man, it was a pleasant thing
To be thus bless'd by thee."

XIV.

THE UNSHED TEAR.

O BITTER is the tear that is not shed!
Back to the heart they say it wends unseen;
There nestles as a fountain in its bed,
And ever and anon wells up, all fresh and keen;
And tainting living joys with sorrows dead,
Floods present sweet with bitter that hath been:
Nor aught can heal this Mara of the soul,
Save the sweet Cross of Him who died to make us whole.

XV.

WATER.

O WATER, element sublime,
Alone unchang'd since Eden time!
For earth and atmosphere no more
Are what they were before;
And all Creation moans its hapless fate,
Fallen with fallen man from its primeval state.
But thou still pure dost rise,
As when the guilty world thou didst baptise;
As when first welling from th' untainted sod,
Where Adam sinless trod,
Fourfold thou flowedst through the Paradise of God!

XVI.

A SICK PERSON'S COMPLAINT.

LIKE him who by Bethsaida's Pool of old
Long time in suffering expectation lay,
So this tenth year I lie in pains untold;
And seeing oft the funerals go this way,
And hearing oft the knell float on the morning gray,
I envy young and old who me before
Into the grave go down from day to day.
Jesu, forgive the sin, or me restore;
Or help me thither soon, that I may sin no more!

XVII.

A DREAM IN SPRING.

ONE morn in Spring
I did me fling
Beneath our churchyard yew;
Then sleep it stole
Across my soul,
Soft as the silver dew.

The graves amid,
Far down deep hid,

Methought that dead I lay;
Waiting all still,
For good or ill,
The Resurrection-day.

It seem'd as though,
Through weal, through woe,
Thus I apart had lain;
For years untold,
In heat, in cold,
In drought and drizzling rain.

But now the sun had fill'd the air
With summer warmth and glee;
And like the soft breath of a prayer
Was that warm sun to me.

The buds had burst their winter shroud,
The lark was in the skies;
High up I heard him singing loud,
And long'd with him to rise.

"Ah, why," thought I,
"Must I thus lie,
While in the Springtide gay,
Waking from sleep,
These earthlings keep
Their Resurrection-day?

O, when at last
Shall the trumpet-blast
Be peal'd o'er earth and sea?
By Prophets old
Long since foretold,—
Sole hope of life to me!"

Then smote mine ear,
From some grave near,
Low whispering on the air,
"That time is known
In Heaven alone,
Nor to the Angels there.

Suffice for thee
That hour shall be,
Then lay thee down at rest;
Thrice happy if the lot be thine,
Waking at last, by grace divine
To waken with the blest."

XVIII.

THE SOUL. A COMPARISON.

A NARROW brooklet ill befits
The ship in gallant trim,
Destin'd across the ocean-waves
With precious freight to swim.

So, too, the heart confin'd to earth
A stranded object lies;
Meant by its Maker to maintain
Communion with the skies.

O my poor bark, so long aground,
Expand thy drooping sail;
Forsake the shallow inland coast,
And catch the open gale.

It ill becomes thine origin,
Thy destiny sublime,
To lie immers'd in vanities
Upon the shoal of time.

Let not a petty earthly pool
That noble keel detain,
Bound with immortal freight to cross
Th' illimitable main!

XIX.

TO THE PLUMES ON A HEARSE.

Ye sable plumes,
That soft and tremulous,
Like foliage of Norwegia's sombre pine,
Wave in the listless breeze!

Within your depth
Of dim funereal shade,
Ah, me, what grisly images of death,
What shapes of darkness dwell!

E'en as I gaze,
I seem their forms to see,
Through your recesses of umbrageous gloom
In silence gliding by—

Sickness and Pain!
And unrepented Guilt!
Pale Disappointment, haggard Misery!
Despair with wringing hands!

Terror, Remorse!
Bereavement dumb with woe!
And agonising Grief, that vainly wails
And will not be consol'd!—

Avaunt, avaunt!
Ye phantoms of the grave!
I sign me with the Cross! Your power is naught!
In vain, in vain ye try

To fright the soul,
To whom her Lord is nigh:—
Who, fix'd in Him, for Him resign'd to live,
In Him exults to die!

XX.

HOPE AND MEMORY.

THERE are two Beings, rich in wondrous powers,
Twin-sisters, kindly wont to dwell with man:
One owns the treasures of all future hours;
The other grasps the past within her span;—

Hope ever smiling, bright with thousand dyes
From the gay hues distill'd of golden morn;
And Memory breathing softly-soothing sighs,
Sweet as the rose, yet not without its thorn.

These two together, through life's weary way
Trip hand in hand, and scatter fairy flowers;
Together breathe around inspiring day,
And water desert earth with genial showers.

Apart—so speaks a voice from yonder grave—
The power of each to bless, no more may last;
Without a future, who the past would crave?
And who a future, if denied the past?

XXI.

ON VISITING THE ROOM WHERE I WAS BORN.

O, FOR a time of quiet thought,
Upon this birthday morn!
When I behold what long I've sought,—
The room where I was born.

And is it true, and can it be,
That at no distant day,
In this same room which now I see,
A newborn babe I lay?

And here, mysterious soul of mine,
Did thy young life begin,
Cast breathless by decree divine
Into a world of sin?

Mortality's immortal dawn!
O truth sublimely strange!
The more revolv'd, the more withdrawn
Beyond my reason's range!

Thou, Lord, alone, who didst create,
Canst tell, and none but Thee,
The marvels of my present state,
Of what I yet shall be.

I see the wall, whose surface gay
Of flower-inwoven maze,
Greeted so oft at peep of day
My gentle mother's gaze.

I see the lattice, whence the light
First smote my quivering eye,
And flooding o'er me came the sight
Of earth and azure sky.

When, frighted at the world so new,
Wailing I hid my head;
And to my mother's bosom drew,
And there was comforted.

O, mix'd vicissitudes of life!
O, maze of many a scene,
Through which since then, in peace or strife,
My being's course has been!

Thoughts incommunicably strange
Contract my aching brow,
As, musing on from change to change,
I trace my life till now.

Jesu, all praise! Alas, in ways
Of darkness I have trod!
Yet still at least my early days
Were sanctified to God;

When at thy font of life divine
  Thine arms encircled me,
By nature born a child of sin,
  By grace new born to Thee.

Since then I've sinn'd, since then I've stray'd,
  Till all but lost I seem;
Yet still to Thee be glory paid,
  Who solely canst redeem!

XXII.

LESSON FROM A CLOUD.

Dark and dismal as the tomb
  To the wretch condemn'd to die,
So yon cloud with sickly gloom
  Overspreads the cheerful sky.

While the shadows which it traces
  Thus obscure this lower scene;
On the side that heav'nward faces,
  All is sunny and serene.

So in troubles small or great,
  Let us take the comfort given,—
Even to the darkest fate,
  There's a side that looks to Heaven!

XXIII.

THE SEASIDE.

When in the sweet childhood that's gone
I stood by the side of the main,
At every new wave that roll'd on,
I wonder'd again and again.

As I gather'd the shells on its shore,
As I gaz'd on the vessels at sea,
The mystery grew more and more,
And could not interpreted be.

The thoughts which my childhood beguil'd,
Were an emblem, I well can see how;—
As I thought of the sea when a child,
So I think of eternity now.

I stand by the side of its sea;
I gather the shells on its shore;
But its depths are mysterious to me
As the depths of the ocean of yore.

Every hour that rolls on its way
Brings enigmas which reason transcend;
And the best of all homage to pay,
Is to wonder on still to the end.

Then the sea from its depth shall go fleeing;
All bare shall eternity be;
And they who now wonder, not seeing,
Shall wonder the more when they see!

XXIV.

ON SEEING SNOW UPON GOOD FRIDAY.

Snow, what art thou doing here,
At this season of the year,
Just when earth begins to sing,
Bringing Winter into Spring?
Christmas is thy fitter day,
Christmas long has pass'd away;
Say, then, what can bring thee here,
At this season of the year?

Is it, upon this sad day,
When upon the Cross He lay,
To recall that happier morn,
When the Prince of Peace was born?
Or, appearing to our sight
All in robes of virgin white,
Wouldst thou rather us remind,
In a moral undesign'd,
What great purity of heart
Is required on our part,

If we hope a life to spend
Worthy of the Saviour's end?

Thus in thee, if well inclin'd,
We a useful lesson find;—
Thou wilt quickly melt away;
May the lesson longer stay!

XXV.

TO THE HOURS.

Ye solemn Hours,
That swift and stealthily,
Laden with stores untold,
From past eternity to future glide!

Methinks at night
I see your phantom-forms,
Down the dim vault of time
Sweeping in silent majesty along.

Then to my mind,
As amid leafless boughs
The bleak wind whistles shrill,
Throng buried hopes,—throngs the sad waste of years;

Till half I wish
I might my days recall;
And with experience old,
Trace out anew some better path to Heav'n.

XXVI.

LINES WRITTEN ON LEAVING OXFORD.

How well I remember the hour,
When first from the brow of this hill,
I gaz'd upon spire and tower,
Becalm'd in the valley so still!

The birds sweetly sang in mine ear,
Still sweeter sang hope at my heart;
How bright did the prospect appear,
What thrilling emotions impart!

Since then seven years have expired,
Seven years which I sigh but to name;
Yet I have more than all I desired
Of knowledge, of friendship, of fame.

How strange are the feelings of man!
How changefully link'd with each other!
One feeling is strong when we plan,
We succeed,—it is turn'd to another.

O teach me, great Teacher of all,
Such wisdom to learn and to love,
So to feel, that whatever befall,
It may lead me to better above.

There only are destin'd to bloom
The yearnings we cherish below;
There the past is divested of gloom;
No pain can the future bestow.

XXVII.

AJALON.

Lo yonder valley green,
That downward slopes two crested heights between,
Tranquil and hush'd in evening's lap serene!
Beyond the hills the sun is sinking slow;
While opposite below
The moon begins her silver orb to show,
Flushing each moment into deeper glow.

Like mists of night descending,
In mingled masses blending,
What swarms are these that hither downward pour?
Conflicting hosts they seem;
I catch their serried gleam,
I hear, I hear the distant battle roar.

And now far down the plain
In one broad flow,
A living sea they go;
Pursuers and pursued, the slayers and the slain.

Ah, 'tis the Amorrhite host,
Beneath th' Almighty's sword
By Israel's red hand into destruction pour'd!
O quickly sink, thou Sun;
Let darkness dun
Wrap the world up in night,
And hide from wrath divine the perishing Amorrhite!
Why standest thou so still,
O Sun, on Gabaon's hill;
And thou, O Moon, in Ajalon's far vale;
Each in your habitation of calm space
Transfix'd? While time his race
Suspends, and in his stead
Eternity her silent pall hath spread;
Forestalling that great Day which brings the Judgment dread.
And still the slaughtered fall, the slayers still pursue,
In the broad open day,
Where midnight else had sway,
Reaping the harvest ripe of deadly vengeance due.

Josue, thy glory bright
Excels all glory's height!

O force of prayer!
The sun upon his stair
Pauses midway, as fearing to descend;
The moon hangs motionless in air,
As it were painted there,
Till prayer hath wrought its end;
Till Israel's foes
In heaps of death repose.
Then night and darkness to their place again
Return, and silent reign;
Proving by confirmation strong
To all the ages all along,
That whom Jehovah loves all nature must befriend;
Whom the Creator hates no creature may defend.

XXVIII.

ON WEEPING WHILE ASLEEP.

WAKING one morn, in sickness, I was told
By those who o'er my sleep their watch had kept,
That they had mark'd a crowd of busy tears
Trickling from my clos'd eyes, the while I slept.

But I, of any sorrow unaware,
Had pass'd that night in freedom from all pain,
Nor in my dreams the vision of a care
Had visited the mansions of my brain.

Ah, was it then that nature of herself
Pour'd for her guilt th' involuntary tear?
Smit inwardly like that hard rock of old
By rod of secret Angel standing near?

Or was it thou, my soul, in thine own depth
Stirr'd with unfathom'd thoughts too sad to last,
Anticipating death and judgment dread,
Or pining o'er th' irrevocable past?

Thou knowest, Lord, who dost my misery see;
And Thou alone:—this only will I say,
Thrice grateful I to weep, whene'er Thou wilt,
Or choose Thou me the night, or choose the day.

XXIX.

LINES WRITTEN IN MOMENTARY DISGUST WITH METAPHYSICS.

O, VAIN attempt!
For us, poor offspring of primeval sin,
To trace within our soul,
Of its ideas the fontal origin!

What! know ye not,
O ye all-wise philosophers of earth,
How radical a wound
Of ignorance infests us from our birth?

How shorn of grace,
This human nature all in darkness lies;
With scarce a memory left
Of what it was in earlier Paradise!

Whence to itself
It must for ever an enigma be;
A dim chaotic thing
Degraded from its first integrity.

O Lord, to Thee
I lift aloft my supplicating cry;
Teach me myself to judge;
To feel how frail, how null, how naught am I!

Teach me by grace
Daily my nature's misery to scan;
To look in all to Thee
Who art my All, and know myself a man.

XXX.

THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GOSPELS.

Know, weary Pilgrim, that not far remote
From this o'er-peopled tract of modern time,
So humming with the ever-restless wheels
Of commerce and material industry,—
A sacred spot there is, from the rude mass

Of vulgar recollections far retired
(O'er the green plain approach'd where Peter sits
Tending his happy sheepfold evermore);
A sacred spot—the cynosure of earth,
And central in the labyrinth of years,
Midway betwixt the two eternities
Of Past and Future. There upon a sward
Of aromatic and most emerald grass,
A temple stands, well worthy of thy gaze.

Shap'd circular, in pure chalcedony,
And with a circling row of golden pillars
Encoronall'd—four porticoes it has,
To earth's four quarters open; which at first
Of mean appearance seem—but presently
To Faith's clear-vision'd and unfaltering eye
Expanding, as she gazes, soar aloft
From height to height, and in the clouds are lost.
Archangels guard the gates with flaming swords,
The same, 'tis said, who at an earlier day
Did man unparadise; but now to man
For His dear sake, who died on Calvary,
Propitious grown, his entrance they invite
With most benignant smiles; excluding only
Spirits of power malign, who formerly
Infested all the plain. Once enter'd in,
You find yourself beneath a spacious dome,
Within a Sanctuary most august,

Abode of absolute tranquillity!
Where not a footfall echoes! Round the sides
A circuit fair of jewell'd chapelries,
Each with its mystic altar greets the eye,
Each with its mystic window, upon which
In blended tints of vivid imagery
Glows the blest history of the Son of Man
Ineffably portray'd. And evermore
Myriads of worshippers, in spirit borne
From earth's far ends, with mute enravishment
Those courts perambulate, and wholly lost
In musing ecstasy, upon the scenes
Of that dread Life of lives adoring gaze.

Central beneath the dome, a palmlike fount
Of purest living light, in thousand jets
Incessant plays, and with its overflow
A sapphire basin fills, in whose clear depth
All Heaven reflected shines. Around it stand
The four divine Historians; and thence
For all who come, in golden chalices,
The sparkling water draw, which whoso drink
Drink endless life. Ah, then, without delay
Haste, Pilgrim, to that Temple, passing by
Whatever else invites thee; there obtain
Rest from thy weariness; and there enjoy
Celestial consolations! Vain is all
The world can show, with those delights compar'd.

XXXI.

THE SOUL'S ABYSS.

Far down within the castle of the soul
  Exists from ancient days a postern-door,
Opening upon th' abyss where ceaseless roll
  Time's silent surges on th' eternal shore,—
A secret portal, which to-day self-closed
  Perchance to-morrow morn is open found;
According as the thoughts have been dispos'd,
  Or momentary sight, or scent, or sound,
Or breath divine may have its magic bars unbound.

Thither one night by spiral stair descending,
  Within the central keep of my own mind,
Flight below flight—so far, it seem'd unending—
  I went, absorb'd in thoughts of solemn kind;
As through an ancient mine some youth alone,
  With his pale fitful light exploring goes;
And starts to hear or wierdly whispering tone,
  Or rush of water as unseen it flows,
Or other wandering sound for which no cause he knows.

At length I came upon a lonely cell,
  That like a timeworn hermitage appear'd,
Scoop'd midway in a cliff impregnable
  Of basalt rock. A heap of leaflets, sear'd

By Autumn's touch, the vagrant winds had pil'd
Upon the floor; and on the wall was seen
A niche, where, meekly folding her dread Child,
Stood the blest Mother, of Archangels Queen,
Carv'd in the living rock, ineffably serene.

Half open stood the door; I push'd it wide.—
Ah, me, what sight was there! the dense profound
Of sheer infinity's abysmal void
Broke sudden from the threshold. Not a sound
Stirr'd the strange blank; nor dark it seem'd, nor light;
But a great nameless all-absorbing deep,
Upon whose verge I shiver'd with affright,
As the fledg'd eaglet balancing to sweep
Downward on his first plunge from the stern dizzy steep.

Ah, then had I extinct in darkness been,
Lost in the depths of that abyss unknown,
But that a hand behind me came unseen,
And pluck'd me back when I was all but gone.
Breathless before the Mother and the Child
A moment, and I seem'd to kneel and pray;
A moment, and methought their faces smil'd,
As if they had some gracious thing to say:
Then sudden from my dream I woke,—and it was day!

I woke; but still the thought of that abyss
Haunted my spirit with a fearful power;

And long in vain I struggled to dismiss
Its memory through many a waking hour.
O, bountiful compassion of the Lord!
Thus warning us by day and night in turn;
Forcing by fear, enticing by reward;
That man may his mortality discern,
And from his nothingness his true dependence learn.

O Nothingness, from whence my being sprang;
O Nothingness, to which again I tend;
If Thou, who didst the globe on nothing hang,
Refuse Thine ever-present aid to lend!
Essential Being, whence all beings flow,
Teach me my native misery to see;
Teach me my perfect nullity to know;
Teach me to feel how I depend on Thee
For all I was, or am, or may hereafter be.

And thou, pure Virgin Daughter of the sky,
Who, fashion'd like myself in mortal mould,
Wast rais'd by thy deep lowliness so high
As in thine arms Creation's Lord to hold,
Entreat for me that I aside may cast
All things that might my heavenward course impede;
That I may humbly walk, and gain at last,
From all temptation, sin, and suffering freed,
The bosom of my God, whence endless joys proceed.

XXXII.

BELIEF OF ANGLICANS IN THE REAL PRESENCE TESTED.

My friends, ye use a solemn seeming tone,
And teach a truth sublime;
Christ present in His Eucharist ye own,
And count denial a crime.

Be honest; if Him truly there ye hold,
When next the Feast ye share,
Bow down before the Mystery untold,—
Bow down, and worship there!

What, ye refuse! O men unreal, I see
Ye have your words belied!
Farewell, such teaching will not serve for me;
I seek a surer guide.

XXXIII.

A REMONSTRANCE.

Dear friends, I know you mean your best,
Thinking to serve your Lord and mine,
When thus you pluck me from your breast
For having join'd His Church divine.

O if ye knew! but words are vain;
Ye cannot learn what ye despise;
And it is idle to explain
The truth to those who shut their eyes.

Yet I will say, If but ye knew
The things which blindly ye condemn;
Could ye but feel as children do,
And deign for once to learn of them;

Before that Church which now you hate,
That Church which you refuse to hear,
Which in your hearts you execrate,
And which, while you revile, you fear,—

O, with what love and joy and trust
Would you not all with one accord
Exult to bow yourselves in dust,
As the pure image of her Lord!

Bethink ye, friends, a day is near—
How near to each, O who can say?—
When falsities will disappear,
And all be seen as clear as day.

Unhappy those who now their eyes
To close against the Truth agree;
But then with sorrow and surprise
Shall be compell'd that Truth to see!

Pause and reflect; your time is short;
Soon will this hurried life be o'er:
Too late perchance ye may be taught
What might have sav'd if learnt before.

XXXIV.

ST. CLEMENT'S TOMB.

Of all the mausoleums, old or new,
High-fam'd in Italy or other lands,
Thine, Clement, I admire, by Angel-hands
Constructed underneath the billows blue,
On the broad Euxine's amber-paven floor,
Near where Chersona stood in days of yore.

Long dwelt thy memory there among the race
Of simple quarrymen, whose toil supplied
Imperial Rome with porphyry, to grace
Her palaces; and long they certified,
Father to child, the story of thy tomb,
And well-remember'd glorious martyrdom.

How, exiled thither by the stern decree
Of Trajan, thou through all the country round
Didst spread the Faith of Christ; and being found
Guilty of death, wast carried out to sea,

And toss'd into the dull oblivious deep,
Yok'd to an anchor for thy surer sleep.

How then, as all the Faithful, on the shore
Lamenting thy lost relics, knelt and pray'd,
Lo, of itself the sea three miles and more
Receding, a broad open pathway made;
And they in search of thee, abreast the tide
Exploring on, a wondrous structure spied!

A marble monument, far out at sea,
Of purest alabaster, by no tool
Of mortal hand proportion'd,—beautiful,
With curious work of mystic imagery,
O'er which, on opal stalactites uprear'd,
A pearly-tinted canopy appear'd.

And lo, within the tomb serenely lying,
The Saint himself, in tranquil death compos'd;
Fragrant with Paradise; a bloom undying
Upon his roseate cheek; his eyelids clos'd;
His arms devoutly cross'd upon his breast;
Picture sublime of everlasting rest!

And not far off the anchor they espied,
So late his instrument of martyrdom,
But emblem now of better things to come;
When at the Resurrection glorified,
He, who for Jesus did his body give,
In that same body shall with Jesus live.

Such, Clement, was thy sepulchre of yore
On the Crimea's coast; but mighty Rome,
O Fourth of those whom Peter's lineage bore,
In time thy relics claim'd, as thy true home;
And she, who cast thee to a doom unjust,
Now worships every remnant of thy dust!

XXXV.

THE TEMPLE OF NATURE.

O THOU, dread Nature, whose material frame
In elemental strength compactly stands,
In beauty ever varying, yet the same,
Blending in unity all times and lands!
What art thou but a Temple to His name
Who thee uprear'd upon th' abyss profound;
The uncreated Word, who flesh became
For us poor wormlings creeping on the ground,
Unworthy of such love as then in Him we found?

Who, lifting up thy mountain-pillar'd heights,
Thy spacious floor with land and sea inlaid;
Fill'd thy long aisles with mystic sounds and sights;
Of starry sky thy roof cerulean made:
That man in thee of ever fresh delights,

Through dying Autumn and reviving Spring,
Through the long Summer-days and Winter-nights,
Might find a store, from whence His praise to sing
Who is above all praise, of all creation King!

Then, too, lest outward nature should enthrall
Our souls oblivious of the things unseen,
Deep in Creation's adamantine wall
Windows he plac'd of rainbow-tints serene;
Through which His holy Heaven on those might shine
Who purely sought their God in all to see:
O glorious work of mercy most divine,
That nature thus might Thine Apostle be,
Great Lord, and to our hearts preach not herself but Thee!

Wherefore all praise be Thine, who so hast wrought
Each mind responsive to Creation's scheme,
That outward sight should lead to inward thought,
Through inward thought Thine inner glory beam!
And teach us, Lord, whenever forth we go,
The wonders of this Temple to explore,
Thyself, the light and life of all, to know;
Thyself in all its wonders to adore,
Lord of all wisdom, might, and glory evermore!

XXXVI.

NATURE'S ORATORIES.

Thou, too, O Nature,—Temple most divine!—
Besides thy public transept wide display'd,
Hast thine own private cells within thy shrine,
For secret prayer and meditation made:
Blest Oratories! on calm mountain-height,
Or in the forest's dim recesses found;
Or in the natural cave far hid from sight,
Down by the shore where ceaseless billows sound,
And the black beetling rocks reverberate around.

To these thy cloistral haunts, in olden time,
Often, they say, the world's great sages came,
To meditate apart on truths sublime,
By glimpses caught through nature's outward frame;
And here—while, listening to Creation's groan,
They yearn'd with her for glories yet to be—
Thou, Lord, didst hear their hearts' responsive moan,
And pitying their dense mortality,
Liftedst in part the veil that hid their gaze from Thee.

Hither came Orpheus, with his golden lyre,
Anticipating Thine own David's strains;
Here Homer sipp'd the fount of living fire,
And pious Hesiod sang, not all in vain;

Here Numa sat, from busy courts retir'd,
And Socrates with Plato, side by side;
Here Solon and Confucius were inspir'd;
Here Virgil knelt; and many more beside,
Whose names for ever live,—true souls unspoilt by pride!

And evermore came wisdom all unsought
On those who stole in silence here to muse:
But evermore the proud return'd untaught;
For Thou to them, O Lord, didst light refuse,
And in its place Egyptian darkness came;
Wherein, whoso Thy glorious works abuse,
They for their pride shall perish in the same.
O, teach us, then, a lowly path to choose,
And in our heart of hearts humility infuse!

XXXVII.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH THE BOND OF THE WORLD.

Like Isles that on the lap of ocean sleep,
So to the English superficial gaze
Appear the Churches of our modern days,
That multifold in central unity,
With Apostolic Rome communion keep:
But peering downward into Time's still deep,
Search thou the blue serene with curious eye,

And lo, these separate seeming Isles are found
To be the tops of mountains delug'd o'er,
By whose enduring bars the world is bound;
Whose roots extend and meet from shore to shore,
Keeping all earth in place till time shall be no more.

XXXVIII.

FLOWERS IN THE SACRISTY.

Sweet flowers! that here
In bright disorder lie,
Soon to be rang'd
Upon the Altar of the Lord most High;

Or at the feet
Of Mary to be laid,
The homage free
Of grateful earth to Heaven's immortal Maid!

Gather'd for this
By the fond hand of love:
How blest your lot
Beyond the other children of the grove!

How blest to give
To Heav'n your beauty's prime,
While yet unmarr'd
By sudden blight or slow-consuming time!

Dear emblems ye
Of such as early die,
From life's fair mead
Cull'd in their fresh baptismal purity!

They from this earth
By Angels quickly borne
To God's own shrine,
His ever-blooming altar to adorn;

There in His sight
Their graces fair display,
And show new tints
In the pure light of beatific day;

There rang'd before
The golden cressets seven,
Live evermore,
And breathe a fragrance through the courts of Heaven.

XXXIX.

ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR.

Time was when I abhorr'd,
Too much a partisan of nature's bowers,
To see upon the Altar of the Lord
Fictitious flowers.

But now, more fully taught
Thy hidden spirit, Church of ancient days,
I find in this another proof unsought
Of wisdom's ways.

O Mother thou of men!
Who with all Heav'n unfolded in thy sight,
Dost yet no work of human hand contemn,
However slight!

But sanctifying all
That into thy full lap thy children bring,
Offerest their gifts with grace majestical
To Heaven's high King!

Offerest for them whate'er
Of beauty, Art or Nature may afford,
To Him who high o'er art or nature's sphere
Of both alike is Lord!

XL.

THE ROCK OF PETER.

Yes, there are times
When through my being's depth,
Shoots an ecstatic thrill
Of bounding gratitude for mercies past;—

To think that now,
From sophistry's black web,
From deadly subtle snare
Of Heresy, I am escap'd at last!

O, happy I!
Who, spent by baffling surge,
Have now at length my foot
Upon the Rock of Peter firmly set;
Round which the waves
Tumultuous rage in vain;
Vainly have rag'd of old,
And still in vain shall rage through ages yet.

Now let the hills
Be swept into the sea;
Let the floods lift their voice;
And mountains shake before the roaring deep;—
I on the Rock
Of ages, safe from harm,
Will lay me down in peace,
And all amid the wrack securely sleep.

Thou o'er my head
Lulling the fretful sea,
Star of the deep! shine down,
Still evermore the same in storms or calms!

And send sweet dreams
Of Paradise to me,
Taking my happy rest
Safe in my everlasting Father's arms!

XLI.

THE TWO MOTHERS.

"My husband's second wife am I,—
The first had early died;
Two little ones she left behind;
And I her place supplied.

But they, when first I came to them,
By strange ideas misled,
Me for their own dear mother took,
And thus the elder said:—

'O mother, mother, up in Heaven,
How long you've been away!
But now that you've at last come back,
We hope you come to stay.'

Then with a tear, I thus replied,—
Kissing the little brow,—
'My child, I am not her; you have
Another mother now.

O happy things! to whom the Lord
Has two fond mothers given;—
One to protect them here, and one
To pray for them in Heaven!'"

Such was the tale that once I heard
Beneath Helvetia's sky;—
A lady of Geneva's sect,
Geneva's creed bely!

O Nature, Nature! thou art strong;—
False creeds their work may do;
But Truth and thou, I think, ere long
Will break an entrance through.

XLII.

SUNDAY.

Hence! avaunt! all follies vain!
Idle pomp, and sordid gain!
Frolic mirth, forget to play;
Labour, throw thy spade away!
Hark! from yonder spire-tipp'd trees,
On the bosom of the breeze,
Peals in undulating swell,
Sunday's early matin-bell.

Holy, holy, holy Day!
Welcome thrice to thee, I say;—
Thee whom suits uplifted eye,
Heart commercing with the sky;
Bosom calm, and step sedate;
Simple garb, and sober gait.
But, though grave thy temper be,
Yet, when thou dost come to me,
I beseech thee, holy day!
Put not on a sad array
(As amongst our people here
Thou too often dost appear,
Like a widow all in weeds
Weeping o'er our wicked deeds);—
But, O come, as suits thee best,
Cheerful day of genial rest!
Come, with happy winning smile,
Full of hope and free from guile!
Come, attired in raiment bright,
Roseate with celestial light!
Come, endiadem'd with flowers
Cull'd in Paradisal bowers!
Come, with looks of radiant grace,
Such as beam'd upon thy face,
When on bright Italia's shore
Thee I met in days of yore.

So together, hand in hand,
We within the aisle will stand,

Listening to the solemn sound,
Now above, and now around;—
Listening to the Sanctus clear,
Softly melting in the ear,
As with incense to the skies
Soars th' almighty Sacrifice;
There shall rapt devotion kneel,
Breathing fire of holy zeal;
There shall Penitence sincere,
Plead the silent falling tear;
There shall Charity attend,
Changing enemy to friend;
Stedfast Hope that looks on high,
And pure Faith that dares to die,
Seeking out her sole reward
In the bosom of her Lord.

Or together down some glen,
Far from busy scenes of men,
Through the hawthorns we will go,
Slowly wending to and fro;
While the soul, all else forgot
In her future final lot,
Mounting high on vivid wings,
Meditates immortal things,
Till in excess of glory clear,
Present worlds obscure appear,
Heaven's own veil is lifted high,
Death seems life, and life to die.

Such the joys I ask of thee,
Day of joy and Jubilee!
Sweet delight of earth and Heaven!
Sweetest day of all the seven!
These if but bestowest thou,
Here in turn to thee I vow,
Never shall the joyous chime
Fail to greet at rosy prime
Thee, upon the hills of light
Reappearing to our sight;
Never through the livelong year,
Summer bright or Winter sere,
Early Spring or Autumn hale,
Shall thy own High altar fail
Of the sweetest flowers that bloom,
Through the seasons as they come;
Or of those which Art supplies
Oft as fading Nature dies.

XLIII.

THE ORDER OF PURE INTUITION.

Hail, sacred Order of eternal Truth!
That deep within the soul,
In axiomatic majesty sublime,
One undivided whole,—

Up from the underdepth unsearchable
Of primal Being springs,
An inner world of thought, co-ordinate
With that of outward things!

Hail, Intuition pure! whose essences
The central core supply
Of conscience, language, science, certitude,
Art, beauty, harmony!

Great God! I thank Thy majesty supreme,
Whose all-creative grace
Not in the sentient faculties alone
Has laid my reason's base;

Not in abstractions thin by slow degrees
From grosser forms refin'd;
Not in tradition, nor the broad consent
Of conscious humankind;—

But in th' essential Presence of Thyself,
Within the soul's abyss;
Thyself, alike of her intelligence
The fount, as of her bliss;

Thyself, by nurture, meditation, grace,
Reflexively reveal'd;
Yet ever acting on the springs of thought,
E'en when from thought conceal'd!

XLIV.

THE CAPTIVE LINNET.

This morn upon the May-tree tall
That shelters our suburban wall
A curious sight I spied,—
A linnet young, of plumage gay,
Fast to the trembling topmost spray
By strange misfortune tied.

There helpless dangling, all in vain
From his enthralling viewless chain
To loose himself he strove;
Till, spent at last, he hung as dead,
No more by brook and flowery mead
On happy wing to rove.

Then, pitying a fate so sad,
I call'd a little singing lad,
And bade him climb the tree;
With orders, at whatever cost,
Though e'en a blooming branch were lost,
To set the captive free.

With steady eye aloft he goes;
I trace him through the rustling boughs;
A joyous shout is heard;

Then, snowy white with tufts of May,
Down to my feet descends the spray,
And with the spray the bird.

I loos'd his bonds; away he flew;
And grateful, from a neighbouring yew
Repaid me with a song;
But what, think you, I found to be
The chain that in captivity
Had held him fast so long?

A single thread of silken hair,
That, borne by zephyrs here and there,
Had settled on the spray;
Then, as he sported there, had wound
His soft and glossy neck around,
And bound him fast a prey.

MORAL.

Ye children of the world, beware!
Too oft a lock of silken hair
Has made the soul a prize;
And held it riveted to earth,
When, by the instinct of its birth,
It should have sought the skies.

And ye who have for God resign'd
The sympathies of womankind,
With me give thanks and sing!

Safe from the ties of earthly love,
Let all your thoughts be fix'd above,
On your eternal King!

Thrice happy! who, for once and all
Releas'd from fond affection's thrall,
No other wish retain,
Except to serve your Lord aright,
And His neglected love requite
Who once for you was slain!

Erewhile enslav'd to vanity,
Rejoice that ye are wholly free
To seek the joys to come!
And bent on your immortal prize,
On wings of contemplation rise
To God's exalted Paradise,
Your everlasting home!

XLV.

CATHOLIC RUINS.

WHERE once our fathers offer'd praise and prayer,
And sacrifice sublime;
Where rose upon the incense-breathing air
The chant of olden time;—

Now, amid arches mouldering to the earth,
The boding night-owl raves;
And pleasure-parties dance in idle mirth
O'er the forgotten graves.

Or worse; the heretic of modern days
Has made those walls his prize;
And in the pile our Faith alone could raise,
That very Faith denies!

God of our fathers, look upon our woe!
How long wilt Thou not hear?
How long shall Thy true vine be trodden low,
Nor help from Thee appear?

O, by our glory in the days gone by;
O, by Thine ancient love;
O, by our thousand Saints, who ceaseless cry
Before Thy throne above;

Thou, for this Isle, compassionate though just,
Cherish Thy wrath no more;
But build again her Temple from the dust,
And our lost hope restore!

XLVI.

ENGLAND'S FUTURE CONVERSION.

I THOUGHT upon the noble souls,
That have from age to age,
O England! shone upon the rolls
Of thy historic page:

I thought upon the nobleness
That yet in thee appears,
After the wasting heresies
Of thrice a hundred years:

And musing on thine earlier day,
"Dear native land," I said,
"It cannot be, for all they say,
That thou art wholly dead."

Ah no! I feel, and here declare
With presage half divine,
That in the days which dawn afar,
If not at least in mine,

Thy desecrated shrines once more
Shall their true God receive;
And kneeling Englishmen adore,
Where now they disbelieve.

O joyous thought! how from these eyes
The tears ecstatic start,
Whene'er, as now, I feel thee rise
Unbidden in my heart!

O Day of days, so oft foretold!
So surely drawing nigh!
Which Saints have thirsted to behold,
For which the Angels sigh!

Methinks, although in Paradise
My spirit then should be,
'Twould feel an increase of its joys
In looking down on thee!

Methinks these very bones of mine
Will thrill beneath the grave,
When thou shalt come, O Day divine!
My native land to save!

XLVII.

TO THE HAND OF A LIVING CATHOLIC AUTHOR.

Hail, sacred Force!
Hail, energy sublime!
Fountain of present deeds,
And manifold effects in future time!

Through thee have sped
Forth on their blazing way
Conceptions fiery-wing'd,
That shall the destinies of ages sway!

Through thee this Isle,
So wrapt in Satan's chain,
A moment seem'd as if
About to own her early Faith again;

A moment ey'd
With a half-wistful gaze,
As she in beauty pass'd,
The vision of the Church of ancient days.

Symbol august!
Here on my bended knee,
I venerate the truth
And multitudinous grace that speaks in thee.

Thou, drawing back
The curtains of the night,
First on this guilty soul,
Shut up in heresy, didst open light.

Through thee on her
Eternal morning rose;
O, how with all her powers
Can she enough repay the debt she owes!

XLVIII.

A PROPHECY.

When this half-century its course has sped,
And, like the vision of an earlier time,
The Church of God again uplifts her head
In this proud Isle—confronting social crime—
Confronting Death and Hell—all stately, bright, sublime!

Then, gazing back upon the years that now
Beneath us glide, and tracing how uprose
The fair-proportion'd citadel, and how
Grew in its strength of terrible repose,
Accessible to friends, impervious to foes;—

History will tell, and men amaz'd will see,
Amid what vast amount of tears and pain,
Amid what martyrdoms of misery,
Of torn affections, friendship's ruptur'd chain,
Homes wasted, life upturn'd, and hopes indulg'd in vain,

Were its foundations laid. Ah, Jesu, say,
What mystery is this! that evermore
Pure Faith should scatter thorns upon her way
Instead of roses? now as heretofore!—
No wonder that the world should her approach deplore!

But we, of all things taught an estimate,
Suspect in this some great necessity;
Lest the soul faint hereafter with the weight
Of that immeasurable felicity
Predestinated theirs who suffer here for thee!

HYMNS AND MEDITATIVE PIECES.

I.

ON MY ORIGINAL NOTHINGNESS.

Bethink thee well, poor soul of mine,
  But some few years ago
There was of thee no single sign
  Upon this earth below.

The busy world, as now, pursued
  Through good and ill its way;
Nature her silent task renew'd
  Then also as to-day:

Ages had sped their ceaseless flight;
  New empires had grown old;
Earth's mountain-tops were hoary white
  With centuries untold:

Millions had heard the dread decree
Of their eternal doom:
But where was I?—what news of me
In all that time had come?

Ah, buried in the depths beneath
Of emptiness profound;
All blank to me was life or death,
Or nature's varied round.

No germ of being then had I,
Save in th' eternal Mind
Of Him, who from eternity
All being has design'd.

On His divinely chosen day
I came on earth below;
At His command, whom all obey,
I forth again must go.

O thought, in mercy sent at times
To every human breast,
To stay the wicked in their crimes,
To stimulate the best!

O solemn thought, so full of grace,
So little duly priz'd,
So often by our thoughtless race
Forgotten or despis'd!

Whatever task my heart engage,
Be Thou with me, I pray;
In grief, in joy, in youth, in age,
To-morrow as to-day.

II.

THANKSGIVING FOR MY CREATION.

Not, Lord, by any will of mine,
But of Thy gracious plan,
Father eternal and divine,
My earthly life began.

By Thy election from a state
Of nothingness I came;
Thy hand my spirit did create,
And my corporeal frame.

As now I live and draw my breath
In Thee, O God most high;
So, too, to Thee I look in death
For immortality.

On Thee, through every future scene
Of being I depend;
Thou my beginning, Lord, hast been,
Thou also art my end.

III.

THE END OF MY CREATION.

Oft, my soul, thyself remind,
Of the end thy God designed,
When He sent thee here on earth,
Heir of an immortal birth.

Ah, what else did He desire,
Save in graces to attire,
Then to crown with glory bright,
Thee the child of His delight?

Learn, O spirit, learn to know
This thy single end below;
Learn by this alone to weigh
All the passing world's display.

Whatsoe'er this end obscures;
Whatsoe'er from it allures;
What impedes it, or belies,—
Sever from thee, timely wise.

Every moment, day and night,
Keep it clearly in thy sight;
If thou hope, o'ercoming sin,
Joys of endless life to win.

IV.

MISERY OF NEGLECTING OUR TRUE END.

O, how wretched, Lord, are they,
More than I can think or say,
Who, though parts of Thy design,
Seek another end than Thine!

What a host of phantoms vain
Throngs the busy worldling's brain!
On the puppet of an hour
Wasting an immortal power!

How can I enough lament
All the years that I have spent
At a distance, Lord, from Thee,
Feeding still on vanity!

Hence, away, delusive dreams!
Idle fancies, empty schemes!
Worldly friendships, ever brief
Joys that terminate in grief!

I have learnt at last to know
My true portion here below;
Other hearts for you may pine,
You shall have no share in mine.

V.

THANKSGIVING FOR MY PLACE IN CREATION.

Thou, Lord, of purest grace alone,
  My being didst decree;
And not, as humbly here I own,
  From any need of me.

I bless Thy everlasting love,
  That did my place assign;
And set me in a rank above
  All earthly works of Thine.

I bless Thy goodness, which to me,
  O Lord of earth and heaven,
Hath the most high capacity
  Of life eternal given.

But, above all things, I adore
  Thy grace, that proffers me
The hope of being evermore
  United unto Thee.

For this I pine; for this I pray;
  For this I came on earth:
O, when shall I behold the day
  Of my immortal birth?

VI.

BENEFITS OF GOD IN MY CREATION AND BAPTISM.

O Lord of the living and dead,
I bless Thy compassion divine,
Who after Thine image hast made
This marvellous nature of mine.

All thanks for this excellent frame,
By Wisdom eternal design'd;
All glory and praise to Thy name,
For the manifold gifts of the mind.

But praise above praises to Thee,
My God, for that infinite grace,
Whereby Thou hast granted to me
In the House of Thy glory a place;

Hast made me a child of Thine own,
In the Font of Thy mercy ador'd;
Hast lifted me up to Thy throne,
And upon me Thy Spirit outpour'd.

O, Giver of all, I implore,
This, too, on Thy servant bestow,—
Thy goodness to love more and more,
The more of that goodness I know.

VII.

BENEFITS OF GOD IN HIS PROVIDENCE AND GRACE.

How bountiful, Lord, Thou hast been,
To give me a knowledge of Thee!
How countless Thy mercies unseen,
Surpassing e'en those which I see!

All thanks for the dew of Thy grace;
For Thy pardon so often renew'd!
For the comforting light of Thy face,
And the gift of Thy Body and Blood!

For Thine Angel my footsteps to guide;
For Thy sweet inspirations of truth;
For the checks by my conscience supplied
From the earliest dawn of my youth!

O, blest, had I valued aright
Thy dealings with pity replete!
Had I made Thy commands my delight,
And not trodden them under my feet!

Yet courage, my soul! even still
Thy sacrifice God will receive;
Submit but thyself to His will,
And for thy impiety grieve.

VIII.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

O, WOULDST thou learn, poor self,
The evil thou hast done,
First thy corrupt propensities
Examine, one by one;

And next, consider well
How freely, day by day,
Thou hast pursued them, each in turn,
Where'er they led the way.

Thus shalt thou find thy sins
To be in number more
Than all the hairs upon thy head,
Or sands upon the shore.

Thus shall the Lord to thee
Thy miseries disclose;
O, happy, if thou seek betimes
The remedy He shows!

IX.

SIN.

Reflect, reflect, my soul,
Ere it become too late,
How thou hast err'd throughout the whole
Of this thy trial state.

Go back, poor child of pride,
To thy first youthful crime;
See how thy sins have multiplied
Since that forgotten time!

See how in swarms they rise
Into the light of day;
Enough to blacken all the skies,
And blot the sun away!

See thought and word and deed,
An offspring all thine own,—
Up from the guilty past proceed;
And gather, thy accusers dread,
Before the Judgment Throne.

Thou tremblest!—Ah, no more
Live on to sloth a slave;

Believe, lament, confess, adore!
Soon—O, how soon!—will all be o'er!
Repentance, if not learnt before,
Is idle in the grave!

X.

INWARD ELEMENTS OF SIN.

Thou wholly seest, O my God,
With Thine all-seeing eye,
What elements of sin and death
Within my bosom lie;

Enough in number, weight, and force,
If but they should rebel,
To hurl my soul from highest grace
Into the lowest hell.

Ah, then, I pray Thee, gracious Lord,
By that eternal love,
Which brought Thee down for my poor sake
From Thy bright throne above;

At every risk, at every cost,
Whatever pain it be,
To break and bruise without remorse
These germs of death in me.

And if, by any self-deceit,
  This moment while I pray,
My inward wish would contradict
  What outwardly I say;—

O, take the naked words alone,
  As by my lips express'd,
And treat me not as I desire,
  But as for me is best.

Smite as Thou wilt, eternal Judge,
  O, smite without delay!
Cut Thou my flesh, and cauterise
  Its rottenness away;

Here let me suffer, bleed, and die,
  So only purg'd from sin,
Hereafter in Eternity
  The crown of life I win!

XI.

INGRATITUDE TO GOD.

If there be any special thing,
  In all my former years,
That should with grief my bosom wring,
  And choke my heart with tears,—

It is that deep ingratitude,
Which I to Him have shown,
Who did for me in tears and blood
Upon the Cross atone.

Alas, how with my actions all
Has this defect entwined!
How has it poison'd with its gall
My spirit, heart, and mind!

Alas, through this, how many a gem
Have I not cast away,
That might have form'd my diadem
In everlasting day!

Yet though the time be past and gone;
Though little more remains;
Though naught is all that can be done,
E'en with my utmost pains,—

Still will I strive, O Saviour mine,
To do what in me lies;
For never did Thy glance divine
A contrite heart despise.

XII.

DEPENDENCE ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL GRACE.

O LORD, behold a sinner kneel
  Before Thy gracious throne,
Confessing what he truly is,
  Left to himself alone.

Didst Thou remove the inward stay
  Of Thy supporting power,
No sin there is I might not do
  Within a single hour:

Or leaving me the grace I have,
  Didst Thou a moment cease
To curb those outward elements
  That war against my peace;—

How quickly would my nature run
  The way temptation led;
Become to sin again alive,
  Again to virtue dead!

Within, without, I lean on Thee;
  On Thee for aid rely;
O still my outward life protect,
  My inward life supply.

XIII.

GRACE AND MERIT.

O Jesu, my beloved King!
I give all thanks to Thee,
Who by Thy Cross hast merited
Celestial grace for me.

In Adam, raised to dignities
Transcendent and divine;
In Adam, fallen from the bliss
That once in him was mine:

That grace to which my native strength
Could never have attain'd,
That grace, O my Incarnate God,
In Thee I have regain'd.

O gift of love! O gift immense!
Surpassing nature's law!
What strength to will and to perform
From this pure fount I draw!

By this, how many acts which else
Had worthless been and vain,
Endued with meritorious power,
A prize eternal gain!

By this, to me is open'd wide,
Through death's inviting door,
A nobler realm,—a brighter crown,—
Than Adam lost of yore.

O Jesu, on whose grace alone,
I by Thy grace depend;
Grant me the grace to persevere
In grace unto the end!

XIV.

GROWTH IN GRACE.

THERE is a secret history,
Known only to a few,
Which the world's wisdom cannot learn,
And which it never knew;—

The history of heavenly grace,
Sown like a little seed
Within the soul, and bearing fruit
In thought and word and deed;

In self-annihilated will;
In passions all subdued;
In faith and hope and holy love,
And holiest gratitude.

Grant, Lord, that I this history
Within myself may see;
Then welcome joy, and welcome grief;—
Both are the same to me!

XV.

LIFE ETERNAL.

Life eternal! Life eternal!
Words that pierce the heart with fire!
Life eternal! Life eternal!
How my soul doth thee desire!

Life eternal! Life eternal!
Hope of hopes to mortal man!
Life eternal! Life eternal!
I will grasp thee if I can.

Life eternal! Life eternal!
Depth of depth of bliss unknown!
Life eternal! Life eternal!
Thee I seek in Christ alone.

XVI.

A WARNING.

As the tree falls,
So must it lie;
As the man lives,
So will he die;
As the man dies,
Such must he be,
All through the days
Of Eternity.

XVII.

SWIFTNESS OF TIME.

Days and moments quickly flying,
Blend the living with the dead;
Soon will you and I be lying
Each within our narrow bed.

Soon our souls, to God who gave them,
Will have sped their rapid flight;—
Able now by grace to save them,
O, that while we can we might!

Jesu, infinite Redeemer,
Maker of this mighty frame!
Teach, O teach us to remember
What we are, and whence we came;

Whence we came, and whither wending,
Soon we must through darkness go,
To inherit bliss unending,
Or eternity of woe.

XVIII.

DEATH.

Now let me close mine eyes;
And strive to picture to myself the day,
When, stretch'd in my last dying agonies,
I here no more may stay.

Ah! when will be the time
For thee, my soul, to wing thy solemn flight?
Shall it be Winter's snow, or Summer's prime?
Shall it be day or night?

And shall it be my lot,
Prepar'd by Sacraments of grace to die?
Or shall I perish in some lonely spot,
No Priest of Jesus nigh?

And will my death come slow,
Or sudden as the lightning's vivid blast?
Ah, me! I cannot say:—but this I know,
That come it must at last.

O, then, since thus I live,
Certain of death—uncertain of the day—
This grace to me, immortal Saviour, give,
In Thy dear love, I pray;

That, whatsoe'er befall
Of good or ill, I evermore may be
Ready, whenever sounds Thy solemn call,
At once to answer Thee!

XIX.

SENTIMENTS OF THE WORLDLING AT THE HOUR OF DEATH.

When, rack'd with agonising pains,
I feel my death approaching near;
The world, and all that it contains,
Will like a fading dream appear;

Then will those earthly vanities,
That have my lifelong pursuit been,
Revers'd before my closing eyes,
In their true emptiness be seen.

Then poor will seem and worthless all
The prayers that now content me well;
Then sins, esteem'd before as small,
Will into mighty mountains swell.

"Ah, wretch!" I then shall trembling say,
"And was it for such idle toys,
Thou wert content to toss away
Thy birthright of eternal joys?

O, had I but, while time was mine,
A stricter path of duty trod,
I should not now so much repine,
Nor fear so much to meet my God."

XX.

THE SOUL'S FAREWELL.

Come, my soul, and let us dwell
On each lingering last farewell,
Which, at no far distant day,
Thou perforce wilt have to pay,
To whatever here below,
Shall have made thy joy or woe.

"Fare ye well," I hear thee sigh,—
"Fare ye well, O earth and sky!

Morning's golden-tissued ray!
Changing hours of night and day!
Wood and valley, sea and shore,
I may see your face no more!

Fare ye well, affections vain,
Full of pleasure, full of pain!
Home and friends and kindred dear,
All that was my comfort here!
These poor eyes are closing fast,
Now I look on you my last."

Dimmer, dimmer, grows the light;
Now 'tis thick descending night;
O, when next again I see,
What a sight awaiteth me,—
Speechless standing, all alone,
Right before the Judgment Throne!

XXI.

ON THE TIME IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH.

Borne, as an arrow from the bow,
Upon impetuous wing,
When I have left my body here below,
A pale and hideous thing;

Ah, then what hurrying there will be
To hide it out of sight!
Which done, the world will think no more of me,
Than I perchance of it.

"God's peace be with him!" they will say,
And laugh with their next breath;
O busy world, how poor is thy display
Of sympathy with death!

And thou, who must thy journey make,
Of earthly aid bereft,
Which way, immortal spirit, wilt thou take,
The right hand or the left?

Ah, 'tis impossible, I know,
Future and past to sever;
Whate'er was found at death thy course below,
The same is thine for ever.

XXII.

JUDGMENT.

Twice shall eternal Truth each soul arraign,
Ere all things pass away;
Once at the hour of death, and once again
At the great Judgment Day.

Wherever thou shalt die,—or in the crowd;
Or in the desert lone;
Or in that dear familiar abode,
So long misnam'd thine own;

Or in the scathing flame; or suck'd beneath
The savage howling sea;
Or by whatever other kind of death;—
There shall thy judgment be.

There shall the throne be set, the page outspread,
Whence sentence must be given;
There shalt thou hear thy doom eternal read,
Dread doom of Hell or Heaven!

Ah, then, be quick; thy time is well nigh gone;
The Judge is at the door:
Who knows, my soul, but ere to-morrow's sun
All may be past and o'er?

XXIII.

RESIGNATION.

"WHEREFORE so heavy, O my soul,"
(Thus to myself I said)—
"Wherefore so heavy, O my soul,
And so disquieted?

Hope thou in God; He still shall be
Thy glory and thy praise;
His saving grace shall comfort thee,
Through everlasting days.

His goodness made thee what thou art,
And yet will thee redeem;
Only be thou of a good heart,
And put thy trust in Him."

XXIV.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Speeding upon life's tidal wave,
Beyond thine own control,
Whither and whence a mystery unknown,—
Know this, at least, my soul:

That come what may in after time
Of utmost change to thee,
Through the long vast immeasurable flux
Of all futurity;

Naught of conceivable events
Awaits thee first and last,
One half so great, so marvellous, as that
Which is already past.

Erewhile absorb'd within th' abyss
Of nullity supreme,
Forming no smallest part or particle
Of all creation's scheme;

I, who unmade had never been
A single moment miss'd,
Now in the midst of living moving things,
Live, move, exult, exist.

And shall I then, Creator Lord,
Refuse in Thee to trust,
For all that can hereafter me befall,
When this poor heart is dust?

Ah, no!—I need but contemplate
Thy mercies which have been;
The past is pledge of Thy unfailing care
Through every future scene!

XXV.

DEPENDENCE OF ALL THINGS ON GOD.

All creatures, by a force innate,
To quick destruction tend,
And speed from their initial state
To their appointed end.

God only, amid all that is,
Immovable remains;
And His creation o'er th' abyss
Of nothingness sustains.

Should He the mighty prop remove,
More quick than quickest thought,
All things around, beneath, above,
Would straight collapse to naught!

The loftiest Angel in the sky,
The vilest worm below,
Alike on Him for life rely,
To Him their being owe.

XXVI.

CHRIST AND THE WORLD.

Roams there a pilgrim through this world of woe,
Where virtue serves and vice befriended reigns,
Who would not gladly its delights forego,
Content to purchase freedom from its pains?

Then what sad mortal, panting for relief,
Too much can bless the fond Redeemer's love,
Who bids him hope oblivion of grief,
And adds eternity of bliss above?

XXVII.

THE YOKE OF CHRIST.

CHRISTIAN soul, dost thou desire
Days of joy and peace and truth?
Learn to bear the yoke of Jesus,
In the springtide of thy youth.

It may seem at first a burden;
But thy Lord will make it light;
He Himself will bear it with thee;
He will ease thee of its weight.

Only bear it well; and daily
Thou wilt learn that yoke to love;
Strength and grace it here will bring thee,
And a bright reward above.

XXVIII.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

I MET the good Shepherd
But now on the plain,
As homeward He carried
His lost one again.

I marvell'd how gently
  His burden He bore;
And, as He pass'd by me,
  I knelt to adore.

"O Shepherd, good Shepherd,
  Thy wounds they are deep;
The wolves have sore hurt Thee,
  In helping Thy sheep;
Thy raiment all over
  With crimson is dyed;
And what is this rent
  They have made in Thy side?

Ah, me! how the thorns
  Have entangled Thy hair,
And cruelly riven
  That forehead so fair!
How feebly Thou drawest
  Thy faltering breath!
And, lo, on Thy face
  Is the shadow of death!

O Shepherd, good Shepherd!
  And is it for me
This grievous affliction
  Has fallen on Thee?

Ah, then let me strive,
For the love Thou hast borne,
To give Thee no longer
Occasion to mourn!"

XXIX.

HUMAN NATURE BEFORE AND SINCE THE FALL.

I.

NATURE IN PARADISE.

Musing in a solemn train,
Oft I think and think again
On Creation's happy prime,
On that Paradisal time,
When, in radiant beauty deck'd,
Human nature stood erect.

O, the blissful state of man,
Ere this inner strife began!
When the Father of our race,
Fill'd with beatific grace,
Nothing knew of grief or sin,
Toil without or care within;

When the passions, each and all,
Only stirr'd at reason's call;

When the subject flesh fulfill'd
Only what the spirit will'd;
Every evil germ repress'd;
Heart and senses all at rest!

When no ignorance had shed
O'er the mind a darkness dread;
When the body, pure as dew,
Naught of pain or sickness knew;
From the life-renewing tree
Eating immortality!

Ah, how happy then wert thou,
Soul of man, so troubled now!
Holy, bright, immaculate;
Rais'd above thy native state
By inherent grace divine,—
What a wondrous life was thine!

II.

NATURE FALLEN.

Fallen now, but still the same
In his elemental frame;
Such in nature, as before,
Though endued with grace no more;
What a wreck in man we see
Of that first integrity!

Will and appetite at war!
Passions all irregular!
Flesh and spirit disallied!
Reason obdurate with pride!
Mind bedimm'd in every part!
And a wild disorder'd heart!

Selfishness, that fills with strife
Half the page of human life!
Anger, envy, sickness, pain!
Sorrow with her sable train!
Death for ever lurking nigh!
And a dread eternity!

He, meanwhile, in whom began
All the woes of mortal man,
Still with fierce insatiate rage,
Ceasing not, from age to age,
Each Satanic art to ply
Whence to swell our misery!

Such, O soul, is now thy lot;
All thine ancient bliss forgot;
Such, alas! is all we see
In our poor humanity,
As by nature it appears
Through the long revolving years.

III.

NATURE COMFORTED.

YET, O child of grace, beware,
Lest thou of thyself despair;
Plume anew thy drooping wing,
Praise thy piteous God and King;
Know that there is yet for thee
Hope of immortality.

Know, O daughter of the skies!
That a path before thee lies,
Open'd by the precious Blood
Of thy true Incarnate God,
Which can lead thee back to more
Than was ever thine of yore.

Where by Adam's fatal sin
Death and Hell had enter'd in,
By the Father's bounteous will
Grace hath more abounded still;
And to faith's enkindled eyes
Points a second Paradise.

See how freely from above,
Flowing in a sea of love,

Calm, majestic, deep, and wide,
From the Saviour's riven side,
Comes the pure vivific stream,
Fallen nature to redeem.

See it through the Church outpour,
Every channel running o'er!
See the fainting earth resume
All her long departed bloom!
Hear the thirsty valleys sing!
See the joyful lilies spring!

IV.

NATURE RESTORED.

Lo, the bright baptismal spray
Scattering its rainbow ray!
Lo, the Eucharistic Feast
Wooing thee, a welcome guest!
Hark to Absolution given
By th' Ambassador of Heaven!

Hail, O Grace, divinely sent!
Hail, vivific element!
Hail, O Thou of grace divine,
Uncreated Origin!
With immortal gifts replete,
Hail, eternal Paraclete!

Living life of all below!
Every boon to Thee we owe—
Grace and pardon from above;
Justice, sanctity, and love;
Perseverance, virtue, faith;
Hope of glory after death.

Rais'd by Thee from depths of Hell
To the height from whence we fell;
Born anew as Sons of God,
With celestial strength endow'd;
By Thy present grace become
Heirs of an eternal home;—

Now we do with ease again
What before we tried in vain;
Now each act, from hour to hour,
Rich in meritorious power,
Mounts aloft, and wins its prize
In the realms of Paradise!

V.

NATURE WARNED.

Yet, O man, be not too sure;
Count not idly on thy cure;
Rais'd again by grace divine
To the state that once was thine,

Know that still in thee remains
Something of thy former stains.

Still to concupiscence prone,
In thy native strength alone;
Still to things of earth inclin'd;
Still to things celestial blind;
Still expos'd to daily sin
From without and from within;—

If thou wouldest life attain;
If with Christ thou wouldest reign;
Reaping wisdom from the past,
Know, that long as life may last,
Toil and conflict thee await
In thy present earthly state.

He, who with no help of thine,
Made thee by His might divine,
Will not save thee as thou art,
But by labour on thy part;—
Labour then, and look to Heaven
For assistance timely given.

Labour, while it yet is day;
Labour, while you labour may;
Labour, for the night is long;
Labour, for the foe is strong;
Labour, for the prize is great;
Labour, for the hour is late.

VI.

NATURE REDEEMED.

Soon the struggle will be past;
Calm and peace will come at last;
Soon through death's Elysian door,
All thy pains and labours o'er,
Thou shalt go to join the blest
In the realms of endless rest:

Rest, from toil and carking care;
Rest, from earthly wear and tear;
Rest, from ever present sin;
Rest without, and rest within;
Rest, which no abatement knows;
Rest, and infinite repose.

See thine Angel Guardian nigh,
Ready for thy parting sigh!
See his azure wings expand
Towards the beatific land!
Now his bosom thee enfolds!
Now aloft his course he holds!

"Welcome, empyrean dome!
Welcome, my eternal home!
Welcome, early comrades dear,
First that come to greet me here!

Lead, O lead me, I entreat,
To the Maiden Mother's feet.

There in her maternal smile,
Let me bask myself awhile;
There on her maternal breast,
Let me for a moment rest;
That I may the fitter be
My Incarnate Judge to see.

Jesu, who for me didst die
On the Cross of Calvary,
Not in aught that is my own,
But in Thy true Blood alone,
Do I put my trembling trust;
Spare, O spare, a worm of dust!"

VII.

NATURE GLORIFIED.

Lo, tis o'er! the sentence said!
Lift again thy drooping head!
Hail, eternally forgiven!
Hail, immortal child of Heaven!
He who did for thee atone
Now receives thee as His own.

Or if yet for thee remain
Haply purgatorial pain;

If, thy penance to fulfil,
Thou awhile must suffer still;
Let not this dishearten thee,
Safe for all eternity!

Purified from earthly bane,
Soon shalt thou with Jesus reign;
Soon at thy dear Saviour's side,
Flesh and spirit glorified,
Thou shalt quaff, without alloy,
From the primal fount of joy!

So shall nature, grace-endow'd,
Rais'd above herself in God,
Reach the heavenly goal at last,
Promis'd her in ages past;
And, immers'd in love divine,
Cease for Eden's joys to pine.

So shall Grace that bliss attain,
Sought by nature all in vain;
So shall perish death and sin;
So shall endless life begin;
So shall Hell in darkness hide;
So shall God be glorified;

So shall flesh its Maker see;
So shall man a Seraph be,

In immortal liberty!
Keeping endless jubilee!
Drinking life eternally!
Lost in pure felicity!
Lost in purest ecstasy!
Lost in depths of Deity!

XXX.

ETERNITY.

Hail, dim Eternity! yet dimmer far,
Ere 'mid the chaos of primeval night,
The Virgin form of Revelation rose!
Thee, whether brooding o'er the wide abyss
Of Hell and Heav'n, or with thrice-awful veil
Shrouding the blaze of Deity enthron'd,
How lost in mute amazement, does the mind
Contemplate! Parent of the first of days!
In thee began, in thee at last shall end,
The circling orbs that o'er the vast profound
Sweep on their track effulgent; into thee
This universal firmament shall drop,
Absorb'd alike with all created things,
Save that which, gifted with the spark of Heaven,
By right of promise indefeasible
Exists, endures, immortal! That alone

In thee shall not dissolve, but higher still
Progressing, claim with thee an equal share
Of unextinguish'd and eternal doom!

XXXI.

TIME.

Hail, new creation! which of old wast not,
While in the Father's bosom dwelt the Son
And co-eternal Spirit; Each with Each
Well pleas'd, nor wanting aught their joy to fill,
Who fill'd eternity. No time was then,
Nor was requir'd, until the Word came forth,
The worlds invisible and visible
In condescension infinite to frame;
That so the Father's glory might appear,
His love immense and beauty exquisite
O'erflowing far and wide. Then first, O Time,
Thou too forthwith didst into being spring
(If being may be call'd what rather seems
Relationship of ordered entities),
That all creation might in thee proceed
On its predestin'd course. For whatsoe'er
From non-existence finds an origin,
Needs must in time continue; God alone

Eternity inhabits; God alone
No past or future has, as evermore
Remaining unenduringly the same;
But all things else, the fabric of His hand,
As of progression, so of time admit,—
Time, not in all the same, but different far
In each, according as their nature is:
Angelic time for Angels; for the stars
Sidereal time,—a mock eternity,
The vastness of immeasurable years;
For man, the tenant of this lower orb,
Time annual, in months and weeks and days
Administer'd; while for the insect tribes,
Suffices to complete their round a time
Ephemeral; they in that little space
Long years compress: and as their life to us,
So ours to Angels seems; so theirs in turn
To loftiest Seraphim. O, wondrous scheme
Of gradual duration,—flight by flight,
From lowest time to highest mounting on!
Highest of all no nearer to the plane
Of that supreme and true Eternity,
Which God inhabits, than the mimic years
Of a poor insect's life. Our part be, then,
Thee only to adore, true Infinite!
Thee only, true Eternal! Father, Son,
And Spirit everblest! And O, vouchsafe,
That here by Thine all-perfect ordinance

Establish'd in this sublunary state,
We so may estimate and duly measure
Thy sacred gift of time, our golden treasure,
That every hour to Thy pure glory spending,
We may acquire, in glory never ending,
A life all time, all space, all measurement transcending!

XXXII.

A PRAYER WRITTEN ON MY THIRTIETH BIRTHDAY.

This day and at this very hour,
Just thirty years ago,
Came I, O Lord, by Thy dread power,
Into this world below.

Three times ten years of human life
Hast Thou fulfill'd to me;
O years with good and evil rife,
Which I no more may see!

And here I stand at that same age,
When Thou Thyself didst go
For me upon Thy pilgrimage
Of weariness and woe.

Thenceforth ingulf'd in Adam's curse
By Heav'n's eternal plan,
In a brief space Thou didst reverse
The destinies of man.

O deeds of love divinely wrought!
O Life of lives sublime!
O words surpassing our poor thought,
The treasure of all time!

Thee suffering, and Thee crucified,
Thee dead and in the grave,
Thee ris'n, ascended, glorified,
Able all flesh to save;—

Thee I beseech, upon this day,
By Thy own life divine,
To wash my many sins away
In that dear Blood of Thine.

For I with tears in vain for them
May struggle to atone;
And nothing can their guilt redeem,
But that true Blood alone.

O in the years, if years there be,
That yet to me remain,
Before I cross th' eternal sea
Not to return again;

Giver of all! to me, O give
Thyself in all to see;
And from henceforth by faith to live
More worthily of Thee.

Thou, Saviour, from all fleshly taint
My spirit purge within,
Nor suffer my sad heart to faint
With unforgiven sin.

Thou from the world, O more and more,
Me in Thy grace withdraw,
To love Thee, praise Thee and adore,
And meditate Thy law.

To seek Thine Altar day by day,
Living Thy life divine;
And in Thy sacred courts to pray,
With that small flock of Thine;

Or what though all alone I be,
Thou still my song shalt hear;
Well satisfied, my God, with Thee,
And Thine own Angels near.

O Jesu! who for all didst die,
Thou too on me bestow
A love for all, both low and high,
And sympathy with woe.

O by Thy tears so meekly pour'd
For sorrows not Thine own,
Forth from my breast, eternal Lord,
Pluck the chill heart of stone.

And ever let me others deem
Superior far to me;
And vilest of the vile esteem
My guilty self to be.

So may I to Thy holy hill
In Thy blest time ascend;
Thou but control my wayward will,
And guide me to the end.

XXXIII.

A PRAYER WRITTEN WHILE A PROTESTANT.

O Thou true unseen All-seeing!
End, Beginning of all being!
Wise, eternal, holy, great,
All-creating Uncreate!
In Thy Unity, admired!
In Thy Trinity, desired!
Fount of truth and certainty!
Fount of all felicity!
Pity me, O pity me!

Pity me my sad estate,
Waiting long and coming late;
On a lonely desert wide,
Cast adrift without a guide;
Doubting still, the more my woe,
What to do, or where to go.

O Thou way and truth and light!
Pure incarnate Essence bright!
Jesu, Saviour, deign to be
Way and truth and life to me!
Lo, before Thy glory bending,
Unto Thee myself commending;
All I am, and all that's mine,
Unto Thee I here resign;
Only asking to fulfil
Thy supreme eternal will.

And O, if it be true indeed,
That Saints and Angels intercede;
That, kneeling on th' eternal shore,
Thy glorious Mother evermore
Pleads for us th' ambrosial tear,
Mindful of her children here;—
May their prayers with force unfailing,
Soon for me with Thee prevailing,
Gain for me a courage true,
Heart to will, and hand to do

Whatever shall be counted right,
In Thy pure eternal sight.

So to the Father and the Son
And Holy Ghost, from both proceeding,
One in Three, and Three in One,
With Saints and Angels interceding,
To the Maker and the made,
Be fit glories duly paid.

XXXIV.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

When the first Christian Martyr died,
He saw the Heav'ns unfolded wide,
And Jesus, all alone,
Surrounded by no white-rob'd band,
In solitary glory stand
Beside th' Omnipotent's right hand,
Ready His Saint to own.

Years went and came—and, one by one,
Departing as their work is done,
The Saints ascend the skies;—

Blest Mary, with th' Apostles true,
Martyrs and Virgins, not a few,
And thousands that the world ne'er knew,
Whom age on age supplies.

If Heav'n to-day should drop its screen,
Far other sight would now be seen
Than sooth'd St. Stephen's end;
Jesus, not as before alone,
But circled with a blazing zone
Of myriads, who around His throne
In adoration bend.

O, bold indeed! and shall we say,
Those gathering throngs, from day to day,
No difference make on high?
That time, as still it onward steals,
And its progressive scheme reveals,
From all their prayers no influence feels,
Rain'd from the golden sky?

Forbid it, Heav'n!—It were all one,
Christ from His glory to dethrone;—
Souls of the Sainted dead!
Look down from your exalted height;
Great is our need, and great your might;
Except ye pray, in vain we fight;
Assist us, ere we perish quite;
For we are sore be-sted.

XXXV.

UNREALITY.

O, DEADLY art! high-sounding words to use,
Which goodly promise make;
Then afterwards their meaning to refuse,
And so that promise break!

They told me of the Body and the Blood,
At Faith's high Feast received;
Clear were the words;—I thought I understood;
But find myself deceived.

Of any other Body knew I naught,
Save that which rose divine;
That I had eaten that same Flesh, I thought,
In truth, and not in sign.

Alas! for startled at so plain a creed,
Now one and all exclaim,
"It is His Body and His Flesh, indeed,
But not the very same."

O fools, and was it to such men as you
That I my faith had tied?
I thought at first your promise sounded true,
But find that ye have lied!

XXXVI.

PERSECUTION.

Now is the time to leap for joy,
To shout and be exceeding glad;
While enemies their arts employ,
And friends pronounce us fools or mad.

Did not our Lord Himself declare
That all who love His holy Name,
If they would in His glory share,
Must also bear with Him the shame?

And did He not most truly call
Worthy of His own love divine,
Those who relations, friends, and all,
Gladly for Him and His resign?

And does He not those servants bless
Who bear affliction for their Lord,
And comfort them in their distress
With promise of a sure reward?

O Jesu, it will ever be
My wonder whence this mercy came,
That I should both believe in Thee,
And also suffer for Thy Name.

XXXVII.

HYMN TO THE HOLY GHOST.

Grace Increate!
From whose vivific fire
All acts that to immortal glory tend
Their force acquire!

Hail, Life of life!
Hail, Paraclete divine!
All justice, sanctity, obedience, love,
And truth, are Thine.

Thou in the Blood
Of Him who died for men,
By sacramental element applied,
Dost wash us clean.

Thou to the deeds
Of every passing hour
In Thee perform'd, impartest merit new
And heavenly power.

From grace to grace,
O, grant me to proceed;
And with assisting hand my faltering steps
To Sion lead!

So may I mount
In peace the holy hill;
And safe at last by Life's eternal Fount,
There drink my fill!

XXXVIII.

CHRIST'S HUMANITY.

It is my sweetest comfort, Lord,
And will for ever be,
To muse upon the gracious truth
Of Thy humanity.

O joy! there sitteth in our flesh,
Upon a throne of light,
One of a human mother born,
In blazing Godhead bright!

Though earth's foundations should be mov'd
Down to their lowest deep;
Though the whole sunder'd universe
Into destruction sweep,—

For ever God, for ever man,
My Jesus shall endure;
And fix'd on Him, my hope remains
Eternally secure.

XXXIX.

THE INCARNATION.

As, when across a darken'd room
A golden sunbeam strays,
Myriads of tiny motes are seen
Disporting in its rays;

Such, in the dread Eternal's sight,
This universe appears,
With all its million million worlds,
In their revolving spheres!

Ah, then, what thanks, Incarnate Lord,
Do I not owe to Thee,
Who, being in Thyself so high,
Wast made so low for me!

And what must be thy majesty,
Pure Archangelic Queen,
Through whom the Infinite appear'd
Upon this finite scene!

O, thron'd in pow'r and splendour high
Above all human praise,
O Mother of my Lord and God
Through everlasting days!

Pray Him in whom our substance sits
At Deity's right hand,
That I my littleness may feel,
My greatness understand.

XL.

CHRIST'S TWOFOLD PARENTAGE.

Christ has two Parents, in a twofold scheme,
A twofold birth sublime;
A Father, from eternity supreme,
A Mother, born in time.

He from His Father, by a termless birth,
Without a Mother came;
Created highest Heav'n, this lower earth,
And all the starry frame.

He from His Mother, in the midst of years,
Without a Father born,
Drain'd to the dregs the chalice of our tears,
Then died in pain and scorn.

O peerless mystery of depth and height,
In one same Person seen!
O finite closely knit with Infinite!
Celestial with terrene!

Jesu, by Thy eternal Father's might,
Hear Thou my trembling prayer;
Thou who art God of God, and Light of Light,
Omnipotent to spare!

Jesu, by Thy sweet Mother's tender love,
Look tenderly on me;
Remember, mighty as Thou art above,
I am one flesh with Thee!

XLI.

THE SAME.

Hail, dread Paternity, whereby
The unbegotten Lord,
Before eternal years, begot
His co-eternal Word!

And hail, thou sweet Maternity!
Whereby, O love sublime,
That same eternal Word for us
Was born again in time!

O Father, by Thy Son made man,
Hear Thou our trembling cry!
O, Mother, by thy babe divine,
Plead thou for us on high!

Jesu, by Thy dread Father's might,
By Thy sweet Mother's name,
Upon Thy human brethren shed
The Spirit's holy flame!

XLII.

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS.

See, amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below,
See, the tender Lamb appears,
Promis'd from eternal years!

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn!
Hail, Redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies;
He, who thron'd in height sublime,
Sits amid the Cherubim!
Hail, &c.

Say, ye holy Shepherds, say,
What your joyful news to-day;

Wherefore have ye left your sheep
On the lonely mountain steep?
Hail, &c.

"As we watch'd at dead of night,
Lo, we saw a wondrous light;
Angels singing peace on earth,
Told us of the Saviour's birth."
Hail, &c.

Sacred Infant all divine,
What a tender love was Thine;
Thus to come from highest bliss,
Down to such a world as this!
Hail, &c.

Teach, O teach us, holy Child,
By Thy face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble Thee,
In Thy sweet humility!
Hail, &c.

Virgin Mother, Mary blest,
By the joys that fill thy breast,
Pray for us that we may prove
Worthy of our Saviour's love.
Hail, &c.

XLIII.

TO THE INFANT JESUS ASLEEP.

Sleep, Holy Babe,
Upon Thy mother's breast!
Great Lord of earth and sea and sky,
How sweet it is to see Thee lie
In such a place of rest!

Sleep, Holy Babe!
Thine Angels watch around;
All bending low, with folded wings,
Before th' Incarnate King of kings,
In reverent awe profound!

Sleep, Holy Babe!
While I with Mary gaze
In joy upon that face awhile,
Upon the loving infant smile,
Which there divinely plays.

Sleep, Holy Babe!
Ah, take Thy brief repose;
Too quickly will Thy slumbers break,
And Thou to lengthen'd pains awake,
That death alone shall close.

Then must those hands,
Which now so fair I see;
Those little pearly feet of Thine,
So soft, so delicately fine,
Be pierc'd and rent for me!

Then must that brow
Its thorny crown receive;
That cheek, more lovely than the rose,
Be drench'd with blood, and marr'd with blows,
That I thereby may live.

O Lady blest!
Sweet Virgin, hear my cry!
Forgive the wrong that I have done
To thee, in causing thy dear Son
Upon the Cross to die!

XLIV.

MARY THE HIGHEST BEING IN CREATION.

I GAZ'D upon the flowerets fair,
Amid the meadows green;
On many a treasure rich and rare;
On many a lovely scene;

I search'd the breadth, I search'd the height,
Of all creation through,
From realms of empyrean light
To depths of ocean blue;

But found I naught in Heav'n or earth,
In air or sky or sea,
So beautiful, so high in worth,
Dear Mother-Maid as thee.

O sacred link of heavenly gold
In human nature's chain!
Elect before the days of old!
Conceiv'd without a stain!

Sublimest of created Pow'rs!
My hope and solace here,
Be thou with me when darkness low'rs,
And dews of death are near.

XLV.

A CONVERT'S LAMENT TO MARY.

Among the thoughts that in my heart
Awaken grief sincere,
Causing with sudden pang to start
The unexpected tear,

Is this, that in the days gone by,
Star of the wintry sea!
Blinded by darkest heresy,
I thought so light of thee.

O Mother of my Lord and God,
Whom none invoke in vain;
O Path of life, which all have trod,
Who now in glory reign!

Had I but learnt in earlier years
To seek thine aid above,
To offer thee my infant tears,
Thy loving glance to love,—

How many deeds of sin and shame
Which now my heart appal,
Scar'd at the sound of thy pure name,
Had not been done at all!

How many a desolated space
Of vainly wasted hours,
Had bloom'd beneath thy smile of grace,
With paradisal flowers!

Mother! receive thine erring child;
Look tenderly on me;
From thy dear bosom long beguil'd,
I now return to thee.

XLVI.

CHILDREN'S HYMN BEFORE OUR LADY'S IMAGE IN THE MONTH OF MAY.

FIRST CHILD.

THIS is the image of the Queen
Who reigns in bliss above;
Of her who is the hope of men,
Whom men and angels love!

Most holy Mary! at thy feet
I bend a suppliant knee;
CHORUS. In this thy own sweet Month of May,
Dear Mother of my God, I pray,
Do thou remember me!

SECOND CHILD.

The sacred homage that we pay
To Mary's image here,
To Mary's self at once ascends,
Above the starry sphere.

Most holy Mary! at thy feet
I bend a suppliant knee;
CHORUS. In all my joy, in all my pain,
O Virgin born without a stain,
Do thou remember me!

THIRD CHILD.

How fair soever be the form
Which here your eyes behold,
Its beauty is by Mary's self
Excell'd a thousandfold.

Most holy Mary! at thy feet
I bend a suppliant knee;
CHORUS. In my temptations each and all,
The sad effect of Eva's fall,
Do thou remember me!

FOURTH CHILD.

Sweet are the flow'rets we have cull'd,
This image to adorn;
But sweeter far is Mary's self,
That rose without a thorn!

Most holy Mary! at thy feet
I bend a suppliant knee;
CHORUS. When on the bed of death I lie,
By Him who did for sinners die,
Do thou remember me!

FIFTH CHILD.

O Lady, by the stars that make
A glory round thy head;

SIXTH CHILD.

And by thy pure uplifted hands,
That for thy children plead;

SEVENTH CHILD.

O Lady, by that face divine
Which Angels joy to see;

EIGHTH CHILD.

And by the deadly serpent's might,
Subdu'd and crush'd by thee;

NINTH CHILD.

And by thy robe of mystic hue,
More azure than the skies;

TENTH CHILD.

And by those lips suffus'd with grace;
And by those pitying eyes;

ELEVENTH CHILD.

And by these freshly-gather'd flowers
Here offer'd at thy feet;

TWELFTH CHILD.

And by thy prayers that evermore
Ascend as incense sweet;—

When at the Judgment-seat I stand,
And my dread Saviour see;
ALL. When waves of night around me roll,
And Hell is raging for my soul;
O, then remember me!

XLVII.

PRAYER AND SACRIFICE.

O, WEAK are my best thoughts, and poor
Is all that I can say;
Whether I lift my voice in praise,
Or kneel me down to pray!

Wherefore I thank Thee, gracious Lord,
Whose love provides for me
A higher and more perfect way
Of drawing nigh to Thee!

The way of Sacrifice!—ordain'd
When earth was in its prime;
Us'd by the hoary Patriarchs
All through the olden time.

To Israel's children in the law
Of trembling Sinai given;
To us in later days confirm'd
By Christ Himself from Heaven.

O, sweet ecstatic thought! 'tis mine
To offer, as of yore,
A sacrifice, and one in power
Excelling all before!

For me, upon an altar fair,
Is pleaded, day by day,
The Body and the Blood of Him
Whom Heav'n and earth obey.

For me is immolated still,
Again and yet again,
In the pure Host, the very Lamb
On Calvary's altar slain.

And as the scarcely buoyant plank,
Knit in the vessel's side,
With ease careers across the waves
O'er leagues of ocean wide,

So, too, though weak my prayer, O Lord,
Though poor my praises be,
Yet, knit with this high Sacrifice,
They win their way to Thee!

XLVIII.

PRAYER TO JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

O Jesu Christ, remember,
When Thou shalt come again,
Upon the clouds of Heaven,
With all Thy shining train ;—

When every eye shall see Thee
In Deity reveal'd,
Who now upon this altar
In silence art conceal'd ;—

Remember then, O Saviour,
I supplicate of Thee,
That here I bow'd before Thee,
Upon my bended knee;

That here I own'd Thy Presence,
And did not Thee deny;
And glorified Thy greatness,
Though hid from human eye.

Accept, divine Redeemer,
The homage of my praise;
Be Thou the light and honour,
And glory of my days.

Be Thou my consolation
When death is drawing nigh;
Be Thou my only treasure
Through all eternity.

XLIX.

EVENING AFTER COMMUNION.

Come, let me for a moment cast
All earthly thoughts away,
And muse upon the sacred gift
Which I receiv'd to-day.

This morning that eternal Lord,
Who is my Judge to be,
Came to this lowly tenement,
And stay'd awhile with me.

With His celestial Flesh and Blood,
My fainting soul He fed;
With tender words of grace and love,
My heart He comforted.

He, who of all that live and breathe
Is all the life and breath,
This morning deign'd to visit me
In this my house of death!

He, whose immensity transcends
Creation's utmost goal,
This morning deign'd to be confin'd
Within my finite soul!

He who in endless wealth abounds,
The world's Possessor blest,
This morning deign'd, O wondrous thought!
To be by me possess'd!

He who in awful Godhead sits
Upon His throne on high,
This morning enter'd my abode,
In His Humanity!

He, who for me, a trembling babe,
On Mary's heart reclin'd,
This morning in my heart and flesh
His Deity enshrin'd!

O soul of mine! reflect, reflect;
Consider, one by one,
What marvels of surpassing grace
Thy God in thee has done.

His tender love with love repay;
Extol His sacred Name;
To all the world His greatness tell,
His graciousness proclaim.

L.

THE THIRD DEGREE OF HUMILITY.

O Jesu, if the choice were mine,
Either with Thee to drain
The bitter cup of grief and scorn,
Of penury and pain;

Or else, by Thy kind Providence,
In good estate to live,
Enjoying all the purest sweets,
This universe can give:

And if in either case alike,
O my Incarnate Lord,
The merit would be just the same,
As also the reward;

And if through all futurity,
Whichever I might choose,
I neither could by suffering gain,
Nor by enjoyment lose;

Still, O my Jesu, would my choice
Be this, I here proclaim,—
With Thee to suffer want and woe;
With Thee to suffer shame.

Forbid it, Heav'n, that ever I
Should wish, for me or mine,
O Saviour blest, Redeemer dear,
A happier lot than Thine!

For Thou without reserve hast given
Thyself, my God, for me;
And I without reserve intend
To live and die for Thee.

LI.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

O CHILD of God, remember,
When thou to Christ wast born,
How then, across thine infant breast,
His sacred Sign was drawn.

And when confirming chrism
Upon thy brow was laid,
How in that Sign, the Holy Ghost
His grace upon thee shed.

Therefore, when sleep invites thee
To take thy needful rest,
Be sure that with the sacred Cross
Thou sign thy brow and breast.

The Cross hath wond'rous virtue
All evil to control;
To scatter darkness, and to calm
The tempest of the soul.

Avaunt, ye gloomy terrors,
That haunt the mind by night!
Yield thee, O juggling fiend of Hell,
Before this Sign of might!

In vain, malicious Serpent,
Thou usest force or fraud,
To agitate the heart that rests
Securely in her Lord.

Jesus is here;—I draw me
Across my flesh His Sign;
And well thou knowest, it hath power
To cope with thee and thine.

What though in sleep this body
May helpless seem to lie;
I fear thee not; assur'd that One
Stronger than thee is nigh.

On Him my heart shall ponder,
E'en while my rest I take;
My shield and shelter while I sleep;
My joy when I awake.

TRANSLATIONS.

I.

HYMN TO THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

Æterna lux, Divinitas.

O Thou immortal Light divine!
  Dread Trinity in Unity!
Almighty One! Almighty Trine!
  Give ear to Thy creation's cry.

Father! in majesty enthron'd!
  Thee we confess with Thy dear Son;
Thee, Holy Ghost! eternal Bond
  Of love,—uniting Both in One.

As from the Father increate,
  His Son and Word eternal came;
So, too, from Each the Paraclete
  Proceeds, in Deity the same;

Three Persons!—among whom is none
Greater in majesty or less;
In substance, essence, nature, One;
Equal in might and holiness.

Three Persons, One Immensity,
Encircling utmost space and time!
One Greatness, Glory, Sanctity,
One everlasting Truth sublime!

O Lord, most holy, wise, and just!
Author of nature! God of grace!
Grant that as now in Thee we trust,
So we may see Thee face to face.

Thou art the Fount of all that is;
Thou art our origin and end;
On Thee alone our future bliss
And perpetuity depend.

Thou solely didst the worlds create,
Subsisting still by Thy decree;
Thou art the light, the glory great,
And prize of all who hope in Thee!

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Triunal Lord of earth and Heaven!
From earth and from the heavenly host
Be sempiternal glory given!

II.

ANOTHER HYMN TO THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

Ter sancte, ter potens Deus.

LORD thrice holy and supreme!
God incomprehensible!
Everlasting living Beam!
Fount of joys ineffable!

O Thou Love for ever new!
O Thou Verity divine!
O Thou Unity most true!
Ever One yet ever Trine!

All around Thee countless rays
Make a darkness thick as night;
Whence the Seraphs turn their gaze,
Blinded with excess of light!

Born in Thy triunal Name,
Born in Thee to grace anew,
Thee the sons of men proclaim,
And extol with glory due!

Thee, the Lord of earth and skies,
Owning here in faith and love;
E'en on earth they taste the joys
Stor'd for happy souls above.

Make us, Holy Ghost, to will,
  Teach us, Only Son, to know,
Grant us, Father, to fulfil,
  All Thou willest us to do!

III.

HYMN TO THE HOLY GHOST.

Almum Flamen, vita mundi.

Lord of eternal sanctity!
  From whose prolific power,
All things in ocean, earth, and sky
Draw their exhaustless energy
  And growth, from hour to hour!
Untiring life of all below!
Secret of nature's ebb and flow!
In every element confess'd,
Its cause of motion as of rest!

Come, Thou who dost the soul endue
  With sevenfold gifts divine!
Come, Thou who dost the world renew!
Author of peace! Consoler true!
  Third of the sacred Trine!
To every soul in bliss above
Its fount of happiness and love!

To all who pine in Hell beneath,
Parent of misery and death!

Spirit of love! 'Twas Thou, who borne
O'er the wide water's face,
Didst, at creation's golden morn,
The universal spheres adorn
With majesty and grace;
From Thee again, this fallen earth
Receiv'd a second—holier—birth,
When, cloth'd in Pentecostal flame,
From Heav'n's pure height Thy glory came.

Thou didst the Gospel trumpet sound
Over the world afar;
And summon from their sleep profound,
The dead who lay in darkness bound,
To hail the Morning Star.
By Thee infus'd with grace and might
They went with courage to the fight;
And, casting every fear aside,
The hosts of rampant Hell defied.

Thine be laudation evermore,
From all salvation's heirs;
Thy truth, beneficence, and pow'r,
Let all created worlds adore,
In holy hymns and prayers;

To Thee let earth, in notes of praise,
The solemn *Sanctus Sanctus* raise;
Who hearest every human sigh,
Mindful of earthly misery!

O Thou who teachest us to place
In Thee our hope and trust,
The stains of former guilt efface;
Confirm the innocent in grace;
And glorify the just!
On him who rules the Church below,
Thy truth-inspiring aid bestow;
Direct the hearts of kings aright;
The realms of Christendom unite.

Subdue the world in every heart;
Its leaven purge away;
Bid our Satanic foe depart;
Scatter his force; oppose his art;
And crush his deadly sway.
Faith, love, and holy zeal restore,
As in the Christian days of yore;
And to the flock of Peter, be
Its rest and perfect unity.

IV.

PRAISES OF THE PARACLETE.

Qui procedis ab utroque.

Spirit of grace and union!
Who from the Father and the Son
Dost equally proceed,
Inflame our hearts with holy fire,
Our lips with eloquence inspire,
And strengthen us in need.

The Father and the Son through Thee
Are link'd in perfect unity,
And everlasting love;
Ineffably Thou dost pervade
All nature; and Thyself unsway'd
The whole creation move.

O inexhaustive Fount of light!
How does Thy radiance put to flight
The darkness of the mind!
The pure are only pure through Thee;
Thou only dost the guilty free,
And cheer with light the blind.

Thou to the lowly dost display
The beautiful and perfect way
Of justice and of peace;

Shunning the proud and stubborn heart,
Thou to the simple dost impart
True wisdom's rich increase.

Thou teaching—naught remains obscure;
Thou present—every thought impure
Is banish'd from the breast;
And full of cheerfulness serene,
The conscience sanctified and clean,
Enjoys a perfect rest.

Each elemental change is Thine;
The Sacraments their force divine
From Thee alone obtain;
Thou only dost temptation quell,
And breaking every snare of Hell,
The rage of Satan chain.

Dear Soother of the troubled heart!
At Thine approach all cares depart,
And melancholy grief;
More balmy than the summer breeze,
Thy presence lulls all agonies,
And lends a sweet relief.

Thy grace eternal truth instils;
The ignorant with knowledge fills;
Awakens those who sleep;

Inspires the tongue; informs the eye;
Expands the heart with charity;
And comforts all who weep.

O Thou the weary pilgrim's rest!
Solace of all that are oppress'd!
Befriender of the poor!
O Thou in whom the wretched find
A sweet Consoler ever kind,
A refuge ever sure!

Teach us to aim at Heav'n's high prize,
And for its glory to despise
The world and all below;
Cleanse us from sin; direct us right;
Illuminate us with Thy light;
Thy peace on us bestow:

And as Thou didst in days of old
On the first Shepherds of the Fold
In tongues of flame descend,
Now also on its Pastors shine,
And flood with fire of grace divine
The world from end to end!

So unto Thee, who with the Son
And Father art for ever One,
In nature as in Name!

Of Both alike the Spirit blest!
Different in Person, but confess'd
In Deity the same!

Lord of all sanctity and might!
Immense, immortal, infinite!
The life of earth and Heaven!
Be, through eternal length of days,
All honour, glory, blessing, praise,
And adoration given!

V.

HYMN TO THE MOST HOLY WILL OF GOD.

Almo supremi Numinis in sinu.

Sovereign Will enthron'd on high,
In th' Eternal's awful breast,
Thee we laud and glorify,
Ever perfect, ever best.

Order, wisdom, beauty, might,
Sanctity, and love are Thine;
Truth Thy sempiternal light,
Equity Thy law divine.

Thee the heav'ns adore and bless;
Thee, wherever worlds extend,
All created things confess
Their beginning as their end.

Thee the fallen sons of men
Their eternal glory own;
Call'd to Paradise again
By Thy purest grace alone.

O, confirm our feeble will
All Thy counsels to obey;
Where it hears Thy whisper still,
There to press without delay.

Glory to the Godhead trine,
Only true and only fair!
One in will and pow'r divine,
One in providential care!

VI.

ST. BERNARD'S HYMN; OR, THE LOVING SOUL'S JUBILATION.

Jesu dulcis memoria.

§ 1.

JESU, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest!

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find,
A sweeter sound than Thy blest Name,
O Saviour of mankind!

O hope of every contrite heart!
O joy of all the meek!
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show:
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His lov'd ones know.

O Jesu, Light of all below!
Thou Fount of life and fire!
Surpassing all the joys we know,
And all we can desire!

Thee will I seek, at home, abroad,
Who every where art nigh;
Thee in my bosom's cell, O Lord,
As on my bed I lie.

With Mary to Thy tomb I'll haste,
Before the dawning skies,
And all around with longing cast
My soul's inquiring eyes;

Beside Thy grave will make my moan,
And sob my heart away;
Then at Thy feet sink trembling down,
And there adoring stay;

Nor from my tears and sighs refrain,
Nor Thy dear knees release,
My Jesu, till from Thee I gain
Some blessed word of peace!

§ 2.

O JESU, King most wonderful!
Thou conqueror renown'd!
Thou sweetness most ineffable!
In whom all joys are found!

Stay with us, Lord; and with Thy light
Illume the soul's abyss;
Scatter the darkness of our night,
And fill the world with bliss!

When once Thou visitest the heart,
Then truth begins to shine;
Then earthly vanities depart;
Then wakens love divine.

Jesu! Thy mercies are untold,
Through each returning day;
Thy love exceeds a thousandfold
Whatever we can say;

That love, which in Thy Passion drain'd
For us Thy precious Blood,
Whence with Redemption we have gain'd
The vision of our God!

May every heart confess Thy Name,
And ever Thee adore;
And seeking Thee, itself inflame,
To seek Thee more and more!

May every soul Thy love return,
And strive to do Thy will;
And, running in Thine odours, learn
To love Thee better still!

Thou, who hast lov'd me from the womb!
Pure source of all my bliss!
My only hope of life to come!
My happiness in this!—

Grant me, while here on earth I stay,
Thy love to feel and know;
And when from hence I pass away,
To me Thy glory show.

And, O my Jesu, pardon me!
Unfit to speak Thy praise;
Yet daring thus, for love of Thee,
My trembling hymn to raise.

§ 3.

JESU, the soul hath in Thy love
A food that never cloys;
A sacred foretaste from above
Of Paradisal joys.

Celestial Sweetness unalloy'd!
Who eat Thee, hunger still;
Who drink of Thee, yet feel a void,
Which naught but Thou can fill.

Thrice happy he, who loving Thee,
Doth Thy true sweetness know;
All else becomes but vanity
Thenceforth to him below.

O Jesu, Thou the beauty art
Of angel worlds above;
Thy Name is music to the heart,
Enchanting it with love.

For Thee I yearn, for Thee I sigh;
When wilt Thou come to me,
And make me glad eternally
With the blest sight of Thee?

O Jesu, Love unchangeable,
For whom my soul doth pine!
O Fruit of life celestial!
O Sweetness all divine!

O kindness, infinite, supreme!
My joy and true repose!
O depth of charity extreme,
Which no abatement knows!

'Tis good that I my love should give
Save Thee to none beside;
And dying to myself, should live
For Jesus crucified!

O my sweet Jesu! hear the sighs
Which unto Thee I send;
To Thee mine inmost spirit cries,
My being's hope and end!

Thy presence with me I desire,
Wherever I may be;
This, Lord, is all that I require
For my felicity!

Thy kiss is bliss beyond compare,
A bliss for evermore;
O, that Thy visits were less rare,
And not so quickly o'er!

§ 4.

Now have I gain'd my long desire,
Now what I sought is mine;
Now is my heart, O Christ, on fire
With Thy pure love divine.

Blest fire! which no extinction knows,
Which never flags or fails;
But greater still and greater grows,
And more and more prevails!

Blest love! which flows eternally,
With wondrous sweetness fraught;
Which tasteth most delightfully
Beyond the reach of thought!

This fire, this love, are now my own,
And to my vitals cleave;
And through mine inmost marrow run,
And in my bosom heave.

O joy! O ecstasy of bliss!
More felt than understood!
What pleasure can compare with this,
To love the Son of God?

O Jesu! spotless virgin flower!
Our love and joy! to Thee
Be praise, beatitude, and power,
Through all eternity.

Come, O Thou King of boundless might!
Come, majesty ador'd!
Come, and illume me with Thy light,
My long-expected Lord!

O fairest of the sons of day!
More fragrant than the rose!
O brighter than the dazzling ray
That in the sunbeam glows!

O Thou whose love alone is all
That mortal can desire!
Whose image does my heart enthrall,
And with delight inspire.

Jesu, my only joy be Thou,
As Thou my prize wilt be;
Jesu, be Thou my glory now,
My hope, my victory.

§ 5.

O Thou, in whom my love doth find
Its rest and perfect end;
O Jesu, Saviour of mankind,
And their eternal friend!

Return, return, pure Light of Light,
To Thy dread throne again;
Go forth victorious from the fight,
And in Thy glory reign.

Lead where Thou wilt, I follow Thee,
And will not stay behind;
For Thou hast torn my heart from me,
O Glory of our kind!

Ye Heav'ns, your gates eternal raise,
Come forth to meet your King;
Come forth with joy, and sing His praise,
His praise eternal sing!

O King of glory! King of might!
From whom all graces come;
O beauty, honour, infinite,
Of our celestial home!

O Fount of mercy! Light of Heaven!
Our darkness cast away;
And grant us all, through Thee forgiven,
To see the perfect day.

Hark! how the Heav'ns with praise o'erflow;
O priceless gift of blood!
Jesus makes glad the world below,
And gains us peace with God.

In peace He reigns—that peace divine,
For mortal sense too high;
That peace for which my soul doth pine,
To which it longs to fly.

Christ to His Father is return'd,
And sits upon His throne;
For Him my panting heart hath yearn'd,
And after Him is gone.

To Him praise, glory, without end,
And adoration be;
O Jesu, grant us to ascend,
And reign in Heav'n with Thee!

VII.

HYMN TO THE MOST HOLY CHILDHOOD.

O divine enfance.

O DIVINEST Childhood
Of my Saviour dear;
How in very weakness
Does His strength appear!
How Thy beauty, Jesu,
Ravishes my heart!
How the more abas'd
The greater still Thou art!

Hither speed, ye Angels,
On exultant wing;
View in this poor manger
Heav'n's eternal King.
Ah, by faith instructed,
How I joy to see
These first tears of pity
Which He sheds for me!

O mysterious silence,
Eloquence divine!
O exact obedience,
Would that such were mine!
Yield, rebellious nature,
Let thy murmurs end;
See thy own Creator
To His creature bend!

Near our little Jesus
Docile grows my mind,
Nor can aught perplexing
In His Gospel find.
Come, presumptuous reason,
Fix thy gaze on this,
And for ever after
All thy pride dismiss.

Does not this sweet Infant
Seem to thee to say,
"Cast thy heartless trusting
In thyself away?
Know that if thou learn not
To resemble Me,
Happiness celestial
Ne'er can fall to thee.

Come, ye little children,
Unto Me draw nigh;

For 'tis such as you
That dwell with Me on high,
Who in love and meekness
From all malice free,
Serve their dear Redeemer
With simplicity.

I who pride and greatness
Evermore abase,
On the poor and lowly
Lavish all My grace;
And to humble spirits
Heavenly things reveal,
Which My secret judgments
From the proud conceal."

Thus, O sweetest Jesu,
Seemest Thou to say:
Ah, then, wretched earthlings,
Cast your pride away;
If the God of glory
So Himself abase,
How shall man presume
To choose the highest place?

Sacred charms of childhood
Unto Christ so dear,
Bright ingenuous frankness,
Innocence sincere:

Love serene, unselfish,
Void of worldly stain,
Would that in my bosom
Ye might ever reign!

VIII.

JESUS AND MARY.

Parvum quando cerno Deum.

Oft as Thee, my infant Saviour,
In Thy Mother's arms I view,
Straight a thousand thrilling raptures
Overflow my heart anew.

Happy Babe! and happy Mother!
O how great your bliss must be!
Each enfolded in the other,
Sipping pure felicity!

As the sun from darkness springing
Breathes a charm o'er nature's face;
So the Child to Mary clinging,
Decks her with diviner grace.

As the limpid dew descending
Lies impearl'd upon the rose;
So their mutual beauty blending
In transporting union glows.

As when early spring advances,
Flowers unnumber'd throng the mead;
Such the countless loving glances
That in turn from each proceed.

Lovely Jesu! gentle Brother!
How I wish a smile from Thee,
Meant for Thy immortal Mother,
Only might alight on me!

IX.

HYMN TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

Viva, viva Jesù.

Glory be to Jesus,
Who in bitter pains,
Pour'd for me the life-blood,
From His sacred veins!

Grace and life eternal
In that Blood I find;
Blest be His compassion,
Infinitely kind!

Blest through endless ages
Be the precious stream,
Which from endless torment
Doth the world redeem!

There the fainting spirit
Drinks of life her fill;
There as in a fountain
Laves herself at will.

O, the Blood of Christ!
It soothes the Father's ire;
Opes the gate of Heaven;
Quells eternal fire.

Abel's blood for vengeance
Pleaded to the skies;
But the Blood of Jesus
For our pardon cries.

Oft as it is sprinkled
On our guilty hearts,
Satan in confusion
Terror-struck departs;

Oft as earth exulting
Wafts its praise on high
Hell with terror trembles;
Heav'n is fill'd with joy.

Lift ye, then, your voices;
Swell the mighty flood;
Louder still and louder,
Praise the Precious Blood.

X.

COLLOQUY BETWEEN JESUS RISEN AND MARY MAGDALEN.

Erumpe tandem juste dolor.

MARY MAGDALEN.

JESUS hath vanish'd; all in vain
I search for Him, and search again,
Seeking to relieve my pain.
My sobs the garden fill;
My sighs in tears distil;
My heart is breaking.—Where is he,
Who hath hid my love from me?

JESUS.

Who is this, in wild disorder,
Running over bed and border?
O lady, speak;
Declare, declare,
What flow'ret fair
Hither you come to seek!
Wherefore these piteous tears bedew your cheek!

MARY MAGDALEN.

Say, O gentle gardener, say,
Where have they borne my Lord away;

In what deep grove or glade
Have they His body laid?
Where is that lily sweet,
The Son of God most dear?
Tell me, O tell me where!
That I may go and kiss His sacred feet,
And my true Spouse adore;
And to His Mother's arms the Son restore!

JESUS.

Mary, what blindness hath come o'er thee!
I thy Jesus stand before thee!
I, that immortal flower
Of Nazareth's fair bower!
I amid thousands the Elect alone!
I thy belovèd; I thine own!

MARY MAGDALEN.

Jesu, Master! Thy dear sight
Quite dissolves me with delight!
O Joy of joys! to see Thy face,
And those celestial feet embrace!

JESUS.

Touch Me not yet. The hour is drawing nigh
When thou shalt see Me glorified on high;
Then in Mine endless presence shalt thou rest,
And, drinking of My light, live on for ever blest!

XI.

CHRIST OUR HIGH-PRIEST AND SACRIFICE.

Mundus effusis redemptus.

Sing, O earth, for thy redemption!
Lo, His race of torment run,
Christ the Sanctuary enters,
Priest and Victim both in one;
There to make our peace with God,
By th' Oblation of His Blood!

Guilty for the guilty pleading,
Legal Priest, Thy task is o'er!
Goats and oxen,—empty shadows!—
There is need of you no more!
Not such feeble things as these
Could an angry God appease!

Hail to Thee, High-Priest eternal;
Priest without a spot of sin;
Veil'd of old in mystic figures;
Holy, infinite, divine!
Thou art He whose Blood alone
Can for human guilt atone!

Thou, of life the Lord Anointed,
Led to Thy self-chosen doom,
That same Flesh which Thou hadst moulded
In Thy Virgin Mother's womb

Offerest on the Holy Rood;
Man for man, and God to God!

While the rage of Thy tormentors,
In its very fury blind,
As from Thy pure veins it madly
Pours the ransom of mankind,
Does but work Thy own decree,
Fix'd from all eternity!

XII.

CHRIST'S SESSION AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

Nocte mox diem fugata.

Soon the fiery sun ascending
Will have chas'd the midnight gloom;—
Rise, O Thou High-Priest eternal,
Break the bondage of the tomb;
And above the vaulted sky
Bear Thy victim Flesh on high!

Once on earth for guilty mortals
Sacrific'd in torment sore,
There may it, on Heav'n's high altar,
Plead our cause for evermore;

And appease an injur'd God,
With the Lamb's atoning Blood.

Nam'd of old High-Priest for ever,
By the Father's stedfast oath,
Rise, O Advocate Almighty!
Rise, O Priest and Victim both!
Swiftly, swiftly, speed Thy way
Back to golden realms of day.

Lo, 'tis done! O'er death victorious
Christ ascends His starry throne;
There from all His labours resting
Still He travails for His own;
Still our fate His Heart employs
E'en amid eternal joys.

There He sits in tranquil glory;
There He stands His aid to lend;
There He offers to His Father
Every single prayer we send
There Himself receives each sigh
As omniscient Deity!

XIII.

THE MOST HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

Hoste dum victo triumphans.

When the Patriarch was returning
Crown'd with triumph from the fray,
Him the peaceful king of Salem
Came to meet upon his way;
Meekly bearing Bread and Wine,
Holy Priesthood's awful sign!

On the truth thus dimly shadow'd,
Later days a lustre shed;
When the great High-Priest eternal,
Under forms of Wine and Bread,
For the world's immortal food,
Gave His Flesh and gave His Blood.

Wond'rous gift!—The Word who moulded
All things by His might divine,
Bread into His Body changes,
Into His own Blood the wine;—
What though sense no change perceives,
Faith admires, adores, believes!

He who once to die a Victim
On the Cross, did not refuse,
Day by day, upon our altars,
That same Sacrifice renews;

Through His holy Priesthood's hands,
Faithful to His last commands!

While the people all uniting
In the Sacrifice sublime,
Offer Christ to His high Father,
Offer up themselves with Him;
Then together with the Priest
On the living Victim feast!

XIV.

HYMN TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Vi adoro ogni momento.

Hail, Thou living Bread from Heaven!
Sacrament of awful might!
I adore Thee,—I adore Thee,—
Every moment, day and night.

Holiest Jesu!—Heart of Mary!
O'er me shed your gifts divine:
Holiest Jesu! my Redeemer!
All my heart and soul are Thine.

XV.

HAIL, OCEAN STAR!

Ave maris stella.

HAIL, Ocean Star!
Dear Mother of our God!
Hail, O thou Virgin evermore!
Of Paradise the blissful door!
Hail, Mary, hail!

O, by thy joy
When Gabriel hail'd thee blest,
In peace confirm us, one and all;
And make amends for Eva's fall;
Hail, Mary, hail!

Break thou the chain
Of those whom sin has bound;
Upon the blind thy radiance pour;
Each ill remove, each bliss implore;
Hail, Mary, hail!

Show, show thyself,
The Mother that thou art;
Present our prayers before His throne,
Who for our sake became thy Son;
Hail, Mary, hail!

O Virgin blest!
O meekest of the meek!
Keep us in virtue's path secure;
Keep us, O keep us, meek and pure;
Hail, Mary, hail!

Be thou the guide
Of all our life, we pray;
Till in thy bosom safe we rest,
With Christ's eternal vision blest;
Hail, Mary, hail!

Through every time,
Through all eternity;
To Thee, O Father, Thee, O Son,
And Thee, O Spirit, Three in One!
One glory be!

XVI.

THE ASSUMPTION.

Cantant hymnos cœlites.

See, to God's high temple above,
Mounts, amid angel-hymns of love,
The mystical Ark of grace!
See aloft, on victory's throne,
Blended together, Mother and Son,
In one eternal embrace!

All the sorrows her bosom bore,
All her pains and afflictions sore,
At length supremely repaid;
There she reigns on the cloudless height,
Only less than the Lord of light,
In hues immortal array'd!

There she lives, as a fount of grace,
Ever flowing for Adam's race,
And still for ever to flow;
There, while ages on ages run,
Sweetly, sweetly she pleads with her Son
For us her children below!

Lady, than all the heavens more high!
More than seraph in purity!
A glance of pity incline.
Teach us to feel, teach us to know,
Teach us in life and death to show,
What treasures of grace are thine.

Look on this Isle from the azure sky,
That bask'd so happy in days gone by,
Beneath thy dovelike reign;
Fallen away from its faith of old,
O, bring it back to the Catholic fold,
And claim thy dowry again.

XVII.

THE PRAISES OF MARY.

Pulchra tota sine nota.

Holy Queen! we bend before thee,
Queen of purity divine!
Make us love thee, we implore thee,
Make us truly to be thine.

Thou by faith the gates unfolding,
Of the kingdom in the skies,
Hast to us, by faith beholding,
Shown the land of Paradise.

Thou, when deepest night infernal
Had for ages shrouded man,
Gavest us that light eternal,
Promis'd since the world began.

God in thee hath shower'd plenty
On the hungry and the weak;
Sending back the mighty empty,
Setting up on high the meek.

Thine the province to deliver
Souls, that deep in bondage lie;
Thine to crush, and crush for ever,
Life-destroying heresy.

Thine to show that earthly pleasures—
All the world's enchanting bloom—
Are outrivall'd by the treasures
Of the glorious world to come.

Teach, O teach us, Holy Mother!
How to conquer every sin;
How to love and help each other;
How the prize of life to win.

Thou, to whom a Child was given
Greater than the sons of men,
Coming down from highest heaven
To create the world again.

O, by that Almighty Maker,
Whom thyself a Virgin bore!
O, by thy supreme Creator,
Link'd with thee for evermore!

By the hope thy name inspires!
By our doom reversed through thee!
Help us, Queen of Angel-choirs!
To a blest eternity!

XVIII.

ANGEL GUARDIANS.

Regnator orbis summus et arbiter.

Omnipotent, infinite Lord!
To Thee the whole universe bends!
Thou madest the world at a word,
And still upon Thee it depends.

We bless Thee, whose mercy provides us
With Guardians sent from on high,
Through every temptation to guide us,
And shield us when danger is nigh;

To cope with the furious foe,
Lest haply unguarded he see,
And slay with a treacherous blow
The souls that were ransom'd by Thee.

High praise to the Lord of all might,
All holy, all gracious, all wise!
Who sends us His Angels of Light,
To lure us again to the skies!

XIX.

HYMN TO MY GUARDIAN ANGEL.

Angelice Patrone.

Sweet Angel of Mercy!
By Heaven's decree
Benignly appointed
To watch over me!
Without thy protection,
So constant and nigh,
I could not well live;
I should tremble to die!

All thanks for thy love,
Dear companion and friend!
O, may it continue
With me to the end!
O, cease not to keep me,
Blest guide of my youth!
In the ways of religion
And virtue and truth.

Support me in weakness;
My spirit inflame;
Defend me in danger;
Secure me from shame.

That safe from temptation,
Or sudden surprise,
I may mount the straight path,
That ascends to the skies.

When Satan his snares
For my ruin shall lay,
Be thou, gentle comrade,
My comfort and stay;
And in every event
That may happen to me,
Make all my desires
With thine to agree.

When I wander in error,
My footsteps recall;
Remove from my path
What might cause me to fall.
Preserve me from sin;
And in all that I do,
May God and His glory
Be ever in view.

O thou, who didst witness
My earliest breath,
Be with me, I pray,
In the hour of death;

Console me in sadness;
  Refresh me in pain;
And teach me how best
  I may mercy obtain;

That, cleans'd by confession
  Complete and sincere,
From every defilement
  Afflicting me here;
All glowing with love,
  I may gladly depart,
With faith on my lips,
  And with hope in my heart:

Nor then do thou leave me,
  Angelical Friend!
But at the tribunal
  Of Judgment attend,
And cease not to plead
  For my soul, till forgiven
Thou bear it aloft
  To the Palace of Heaven!

XX.

ST. JOSEPH.

Dei qui gratiam impotes.

Seek ye the grace of God,
And mercies from on high?—
Invoke St. Joseph's holy name,
And on his aid rely.

So shall the Lord well pleas'd
Your earnest prayer fulfil;
The guilty cleanse from guilt; and make
The holy holier still.

So shall His tender care
To you through life be nigh;
So shall His love with triumph crown
Your dying agony.

Safe in the virgin arms
Of Mary and her Son,
Embracing each in speechless joy,
And sweetest union;—

O Joseph, in what peace
Was breath'd thy latest sigh
Dear pattern of all those to come,
Who should in Jesus die!

Hail, mightiest of Saints!
To whom submissive bent,
He whose Creator-hand outstretch'd
The starry firmament!

Hail, Mary's Spouse elect!
Hail, Guardian of the Word!
Nurse of the Highest! and esteem'd
The Father of the Lord!

Blest Trinity! to Thee
From all in earth and Heaven,
And to St. Joseph's holy name,
Be praise and honour given!

XXI.

HYMN TO THE FOUR EVANGELISTS.

Christi perennes nuntii.

Heralds of Jesus through all time!
Who, speaking day by day,
Have scatter'd wide, through every clime,
Those truths that in the depths sublime
Of olden scripture lay!

What under night's mysterious screen,
  Veil'd in a shadowy hue,
Was by the Prophets dimly seen,
'Twas yours, without a veil between,
  In naked day to view!

What Christ, the Man, divinely wrought;
  The God, as mortal bore;
Your pens to every age have taught,
In words with inspiration fraught,
  That live for evermore!

Sever'd by oceans wide apart,
  Yet by one Spirit sway'd,
One were ye all in mind and heart;
And, with a more than human art,
  One perfect Christ portray'd.

Wrapt in a voice of mortal mould
  The Father's viewless Word,
To you His truths eternal told;—
And still, as we your page unfold,
  That selfsame voice is heard!

XXII.

ANOTHER HYMN TO THE FOUR EVANGELISTS.

Sinæ sub alto vertice.

From Sinai's trembling peak,
In trumpet-blasts from Heaven,
And thunders of a threat'ning God,
The olden Law was given.

To us the selfsame Lord,
Attemper'd to our gaze
By the soft veil of flesh, Himself
In love and grace displays.

On the hard rock engrav'd,
The Law from Sinai's hill,
Precepts supplied, but gave no strength
Those precepts to fulfil.

Stamp'd in the heart, the Law
Which Christ proclaim'd anew,
With its commandment also gives
The strength to will and do.

This Law with faithful pen
Ye wrote, O Scribes of God;
Preach'd it by holiest word and deed,
And seal'd it with your blood.

O, may that Spirit blest,
Who touch'd your lips with fire,
Those same eternal words of life
Deep in our hearts inspire!

XXIII.

HYMN FOR THE FESTIVAL OF A BISHOP.

Jesu, sacerdotum decus.

Jesu! Thy priests' eternal prize!
This day on us look down—
This day, that saw Thee in the skies
Thy holy Pontiff crown.

Chosen for his fidelity,
His love, and prudence rare;
The sheep Thy Father gave to Thee,
Thou gavest to his care.

He knew and lov'd them, each and all;
Their lambs he gently led;
They too in turn obey'd his call,
And in his footsteps fed.

Did any sheep the fold forsake,
He sought it night and day;
And in his arms would bring it back,
However rough the way.

He met the wolf's impetuous shock,
His cunning wiles defied;
And for his flock—his own dear flock—
Was ready to have died.

For them he offer'd with delight
The Sacrifice ador'd;
Offering himself and his, with it,
To his eternal Lord.

XXIV.

THE DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH.

O qui perpetuus nos monitor doces.

O Thou, th' eternal Father's Word!
What though on earth Thy voice is heard
No longer, as of yore;
Still, age by age, dost Thou supply,
With holy teachers from on high,
Thy Church for evermore.

They, in Thy stead, the truth maintain,
And guard the Christian Faith from stain,
Against its deadly foes;
Which, under such protecting care,
For ever fresh, for ever fair,
In virgin beauty glows.

Remnants of superstition old,—
Falsehood and error,—from the fold
'Tis theirs to drive away;
Theirs to recover to the Lord,
The souls, whom heresy and fraud
Have made a wretched prey.

They, to the long hoar-headed line
Of Fathers, pointing,—as they shine
Far in the ages deep,—
Preserve the ancient doctrines pure;
Confute the novel; and secure
The great deposit keep.

All praise to Thee, who by the pen
Of saintly doctors, teaching men
Thy truths, O Truth sublime!
Without a voice, without a sound,
Thy grace diffusest all around,
Thy glory through all time.

XXV.

THE MONKS.

Felices nemorum pangimus incolas.

Sing we of those, whom in the forest wild
God hid from human eye;
There by the world's contagion undefil'd
With Him to live and die.

Their home, their native land, their all, they left;
Name, wealth, imperial throne,
Alike to them were worthless; self-bereft!
And wrapt in Heaven alone!

Arm'd for the battle, swift, unfetter'd, free,
They flew to meet the foe;
And wisely, bound to stem a treacherous sea,
Aside their burdens threw.

Their highest glory was—to be despised!
To suffer want—their gain!
The happiness which they supremely prized—
To die by lengthen'd pain!

Help us, great God, to bear with patience meek
The chastenings of Thy love;
Help us, forsaking earthly things, to seek
Thy promis'd joys above.

XXVI.

THE HERMITS.

Avete, Solitudines.

Gentle Hermits of the waste!
Tenants of the mossy cell!
Hail to you, who nobly fac'd
All the raging hosts of Hell!

Yours it was to tread in dust
Golden heaps and jewell'd toys,
Vain ambition's empty trust,
All the world's defiling joys.

Scanty herb and running brook
All your simple fare supplied;
All your rest the chilly rock,
Hollow'd in the mountain side.

Asp and adder gliding by,
Howling fiends of angry night,
Gloomy portents of the sky,
Smit your soul with no affright.

Where the golden mansions glow,
Thither had she sped her way;
From the vale of night below,
Mounting to immortal day!

Praise to Thee, O Trine and One!
Father, high enthron'd above!
Virgin-born, eternal Son!
Spirit of eternal love!

XXVII.

HYMN TO ST. ANNE.

O gloriosa domina.

O Lady, high in glory,
Whose daughter, ever blest,
Fed the high Sovereign of the skies,
At her maternal breast

What we had lost in Eva
Thy Virgin Child restores,
Opening to us in Christ anew,
The everlasting doors.

O, shower grace and pardon,
Dear heir of endless fame,
On us and all who memory keep
Of thy immortal name.

To Him, the world's salvation!
Whom Anna's daughter bore,
Be with the Father and the Spirit
All glory evermore.

XXVIII.

ST. MARTIN.

Perfusus ora lachrymis.

Fixing on the stars of heaven
Stedfastly his tearful eyes,
Holy Martin for his country—
His celestial country, sighs.

"Why," saith he, "O death, so slowly
Comest thou to break my chain?
Whom the love of Christ hath wounded,
Unto him to die is gain.

Vain are all thy fiery hissings;
Vain thy fury, serpent foul;
Back to shades of night return thee;
Heav'n is calling for my soul.

Children of my love, I pray you,
All your care for me dismiss;
Cease, by your fond supplications,
To retard your father's bliss.

Yet if earth my labour needeth,
Though my crown so near I view,
See me ready, O my Jesu,
To resume the fight anew."

Thus the Saint, in perfect patience,
Bows submissive to his lot,
And for death supremely yearning,
Still to live refuses not.

XXIX.

ST. FRANCIS.

Crucis Christi mons Alvernæ.

Let Alverna's holy mountain
That high mystery proclaim,
Of the stamps of life eternal
Which on blessed Francis came;
While he sobb'd, and while he sigh'd,
Grieving for the Crucified.

There, within a lonely cavern,
Far from all the world withdrawn,
As the Saint his watch was keeping,
With incessant scourgings torn;
Ever musing more and more
On the wounds that Jesus bore;—

As he pray'd in cold and hunger;
As he pour'd his glowing tears;
In his fervent spirit mounting
Far above terrestrial spheres,

Every earthly thing forgot
In his Saviour's bitter lot;—

Lo to him, in form seraphic,
Borne upon a cross on high,
Six irradiant wings expanding,
Came the King of glory nigh!
Gazing on him with a face
Of benignity and grace.

He that tender glance returning,
Saw th' Incarnate Light of Light;
Saw his gracious meek Redeemer,
Rob'd in glory infinite;
Drank the words that from Him fell,—
Words divine, unspeakable!

Straightway all the sacred summit
Kindles like a flaming pyre;
Holy Francis sinks enraptur'd,
Fainting with ecstatic fire;
And upon his flesh appear
Christ's immortal stigmata!

Honour to the high Redeemer,
Who for us in torments died;
In whose image blessed Francis
Suffer'd and was sanctified,
Counting every thing but loss
For the glory of the Cross.

XXX.

ST. BENEDICT.

Deserta, valles, lustra, solitudines.

Ye glens and umbrageous woods!
Ye solitudes awful and drear!
Where rarely a sunbeam intrudes,
Your lonely recesses to cheer!

Too long ye conceal'd from the eyes
Of a world which he yearn'd to reclaim,
The Saint, who now shines in the skies,
An heir of celestial fame.

O, how did his tears as they fell,
Bedew the cold pitiless ground!
O, how did his sobbings dispel
The silence that brooded around!

Thou, cave, which before me I see,
So wrapt in impervious gloom,
What years he remain'd within thee,
Alive in thy desolate tomb!

Ah, tell me, while here he lay hid,
Beam'd not some ineffable ray,
Diffusing, thy darkness amid,
A glory more bright than the day?

Ah, tell me, what shrub of the wild,
With berries his hunger supplied?
Where rises the spring that beguil'd
The thirst he so often denied?

What dim and disconsolate nook
Afforded his limbs their repose?
What comrades, if any, partook
In a life so replenish'd with woes?

The prizes which worldlings adore,
For which they incessantly sigh,—
All these, in his eyes, were no more
Than flowers long wither'd and dry.

For faith had the hermit upborne
Aloft to her heavenly seat;
From whence he regarded with scorn
The world as it lay at his feet.

And to Heav'n transporting his mind,
He reck'd not of country or home;
Too glad to have left them behind
In search of the glory to come!

With Thee, both awake and asleep,
He studied, O Jesu, to be,
Well learn'd in that ignorance deep,
Whose knowledge is only of Thee.

For this, in the caves of the rock,
He fled in his boyhood to hide;
For this, e'en himself he forsook,
When nothing was left him beside!

All praise to the Father above;
All praise to His infinite Son;
All praise to the Spirit of love;
While the days of eternity run.

XXXI.

FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT.

VESPERS.

Laudibus cives resonent canoris.

THROUGH the long nave and full-resounding aisles
Let pealing anthems rise;
This day, that saw immortal Benedict
Ascend the skies!

A flowery path, affection, home, were his;
But vainly earth allured;
Deep in a lonesome cave his tender bloom
The Saint immured.

There, amid prickly thorns, he curb'd the rage
Of sin-incentive youth;

There drew his sacred rule from the pure fount
Of life and truth.

There still upon the height the Baptist's shrine,
Memorial of his love,
Tells how he smote the Pagan god, and strew'd
The Paphian grove.

Now from the heavenly dome, seated serene
Amid seraphic choirs,
He sees us all, and with celestial draughts
Each heart inspires.

Glory eternal to the Father be,
And sole-begotten Son;
With Thee, great Paraclete, eternal Three!
And trinal One!

XXXII.

THE SAME.

MATINS.

Quidquid antiqui cecinere vates.

Whate'er the tuneful Prophets teach, whate'er
The Law of olden days,
Great monarch of ascetic multitudes!
Thy life displays!

A glorious progeny is Abraham's boast;
Meekness in Moses shone;
Faultless obedience and a beauteous spouse
Were Isaac's crown;

But our exalted heavenly patriarch,
Immeasurably blest,
Concentres all their glory, virtue, praise,
In his sole breast.

O, may his arm of might, that caught us up
From the world's stormy tide,
Here keep us evermore, where halcyon calm
And peace abide!

Glory eternal, &c.

XXXIII.

THE SAME.

LAUDS.

Inter æternas Superûm coronas.

Of all eternity's bright diadems,
In Faith's high combat won,
Brighter than thine, celestial Benedict,
There glitter none.

Pleasure in thee had naught;—the grace of age
Was o'er thy boyhood shed;

All dust to thee the world's fair bloom, whose heart
To Heaven had fled.

Country and home abandon'd, for the depths
Of the lone forest rude;
There, while to Christ thy soul self-mastering,
The flesh subdued;

Lo, thee unknown, thy peerless miracles
A Saint of God display;
And forth through all the world thy glory speeds
On wings of day!

Glory eternal, &c.

XXXIV.

THE SAME.

SEQUENCE AT MASS.

Læta quies magni ducis.

Welcome the glad returning morn!
In hues of golden glory born!
Which saw, divinely blest,
Our Chieftain in the sacred fight,
Mounting the pearly stairs of light,
To his eternal rest.

See the glad Vision's bright array
Ascending on its orient way;—
  See there the Patriarch shine!
A second Abraham on high,
Amidst his glorious progeny
  Seated in bliss divine!

Blest Hermit! in his rocky cell,
As to Elias erst befell,
  By the wild raven fed!
Whose voice the sunken axe obey'd,
Rising, as when Eliseus pray'd,
  Up from the torrent's bed!

With hoary Jacob's eagle eye
Piercing the far futurity;
  With Joseph heavenly pure;
May he to us, his sons below,
The path of joys immortal show,
  And guide us there secure!

XXXV.

ST. WINIFRED'S WELL.

Virgo vernans velut rosa.

More fair than all the vernal flowers
  Embosom'd in the dales,

St. Winifred in beauty bloom'd
The rose of ancient Wales.

With every loveliest grace adorn'd,
The Lamb's unsullied Bride;
Apart from all the world she dwelt
Upon this mountain side.

Till Caradoc, with impious love,
Her fleeing steps pursued,
And in her sacred maiden blood
His cruel hands imbrued.

He straight the debt of vengeance paid,
Ingulf'd in yawning flame;
But God a deed of wonder work'd
To her immortal fame.

For where the verdant turf receiv'd
The Martyr's sever'd head,
This holy fountain upward gush'd,
Of crystal vein'd with red.

Here miracles of might are wrought;
Here all diseases fly;
Here see the blind, and speak the dumb,
Who but in faith draw nigh.

Assist us, glorious Winifred,
  Dear Virgin, ever blest!
The passions of our hearts appease,
  And lull each storm to rest.

XXXVI.

AN EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE.

Homo Dei creatura.

Creature of God, immortal man!
  Poor vessel wrought of clay!
Whose present life is but a span,
  So quick it fleets away!
Why on Eternity's high prize
So little dost thou set thine eyes?
  Ah! didst thou but its greatness know,
Then wouldst thou covet it alone,
Nor waste a single thought upon
  These vanities below.

And O, if but thou couldest feel,
  And see and understand
The greatness of the pains of Hell,
  Upon the other hand,

How wouldst thou hasten at the view
Thy carnal passions to subdue!
  How, trembling with excess of dread,
Wouldst thou thy former life recall;
Thy sins lamenting, each and all,
  Of thought and word and deed!

Such is the bliss of Saints on high,
  Such is the utter woe
For sinners, from eternity
  Prepar'd in Hell below;
That the immensity of each
No thought can grasp or language reach:
  Then only is it truly known,
When, borne upon her secret flight,
The soul departs to endless night,
  Or to a glorious crown.

When to the silence of the tomb
  The flesh in death descends,
Naught of the soul's eternal doom
  Is known to former friends;
Whether it be in bliss or woe,
But few a passing thought bestow:
  Some decent tears, perchance, they shed,
Then haste the heritage to share,

And eager for the spoil, prepare
To battle o'er the dead!

Both good and bad fall equally
By death's relentless aim;
And to the carnal human eye
Their lot appears the same;
But things alike to outer sense
Hide an eternal difference;—
No after-prayers will pardon win;
Naught will avail funereal rite,
Or Sacrifice, for him whom night
O'ertakes in mortal sin.

Ah, wretch! to him the time is past
For penitential tears;
The hour delay'd is come at last,
Whence no retreat appears;
Look he below, or look on high,
There is no place where he may fly
From his Almighty Judge severe;
Hide he in Heav'n or deepest Hell,
There is a force will him compel
His bitter doom to hear.

The soul that never Jesus lov'd,
Nor serv'd in Mary's train,
From every hope of bliss remov'd,
Will then lament in vain:

For her no Patron Saint will plead,
No tender Guardian intercede;
For well—alas! too well—they know,
Vainly would Heav'n its labour spend,
Striving to save a soul condemn'd
To everlasting woe.

The Angels, while with tearful eyes
They bid a long adieu,
Will still confess the judgment wise,
And own the sentence true.
Yea, all the creatures of the Lord
Will that most righteous Judge applaud,
Nor any other sentence give;
Which, piercing through her heart of pride,
Will sorer still than all beside
Her guilty conscience grieve.

Conscience itself, in blank despair,
Forc'd in its own despite,
Against itself will witness bear,
And own the judgment right.—
Ah! then the torments will begin,
Torments for unrepented sin;
Then, lost to every chance of bliss,
The soul to furious madness driven,
Smit by a sudden blast from Heaven,
Shall sweep to Hell's abyss!

There in herself most desolate,
Whelm'd in the fiery flood,
Object of her own endless hate,
Abhorrence of the good;
Fated to weep, and weep in vain;—
Never may she come forth again
From her drear prison-house of woe;
Sever'd from Heav'n, confin'd to Hell,
By a deep gulf, impassable,
While countless ages flow.

Alas! what tongue of man can speak,
What heart can comprehend,
That vengeance which the Lord will wreak
Upon the souls condemn'd?
The dread variety of pains
Apportion'd to their thousand stains?
The torments singly to each soul
Strictly awarded, one by one,
According to what each has done?
The horror of the whole?

The fiery storm, the frozen blast;
The darkness thickly spread;
The shrieks of anguish rolling past;
The stench, as of the dead;
The pressure close, the stifling breath;
The sense of everlasting death;

The Hellish crew, the spectres dim;
The fear, the thirst unquenchable;—
All these with bitter torments fill
Their chalice to the brim.

So widely stretch, so deep descend,
The murky vales below;
In such immensity extend
Those tracts of dismal woe;
That earth, and all its realms contain,
With Hell would be compar'd in vain;
Nay, all comparison is naught:
Of earth we speak from what we see;
But Hell is utter mystery,
Exceeding sense and thought.

So, too, the bliss of Saints on high,
The joys that Angels feel,
The glory of the Deity,
No tongue of man can tell:
There, safe from all that breeds annoy,
Thou shalt eternal God enjoy;
There all things in His brightness see;
There nimbly rove in liquid light,
Replete with love and grace and might,
In perfect liberty.

There shalt thou of thy Maker's face
Enjoy the vision blest;
There in His infinite embrace
Be of all good possess'd.
O bliss extreme! which hath no close,
No bitter separation knows,
To which no ill can entrance find;
Where, from without as from within,
No grief can come, no fear, no sin,
To terrify the mind.

There glide the Seraphs to and fro,
With faces bright and fair;
There rivers of Elysium flow;
Death is a stranger there;
Its very memory is forgot
As though it had existed not;
There at the fount of termless bliss
The soul enamour'd laps her fill,
Slaking her thirst unquenchable,
And bathes in joy's abyss.

No ear hath heard, no eye can see,
No heart can comprehend,
That exquisite felicity
Of glory without end,
Which they enjoy, to whom 'tis given
Always to see their God in Heaven;

He only measures it aright,
Who, seated with the Saints elect,
Feels in himself the full effect
Of that supreme delight.

Thus warn'd of guilt's eternal doom,
As of the blest reward
Awaiting in the life to come
The servants of the Lord;
Knowing the sinner's evil fate,
Knowing the saint's delightsome state,
Let us a prudent course begin,
And choose the safer, better way,
Those years bewailing day by day
That we have spent in sin.

Nor let us live, as lives the brute,
Immers'd in things below,
Lest found at death devoid of fruit
We pass to endless woe;
But let us now, while yet we may,
For our much needed pardon pray;
And think on our dear Saviour's love,
And meditate His death divine;
So but He may our hearts incline
To higher things above.

See how the world before our eyes
  Is speeding to decay!
See how its painted vanities
  Are withering fast away!
How into dark and darker shades
Its evanescent glory fades!
  Glory which drowns the soul in Hell!
Ah, then, take we with Heav'n our part;
And on its glory in our heart
  Of hearts for ever dwell!

So, when we must from hence away,
  May we depart resign'd;
And, changing night for endless day,
  In God our glory find;
That God in whom all glory ends;
In Him begins, from Him descends;
  To whom alone all glory be,
All adoration, blessing, love,
From all below and all above,
  Through all eternity.

XXXVII.

THE GLORY AND JOYS OF PARADISE.

Ad perennis vitæ fontem.

On the fount of life eternal
  Gazing wistful and athirst;
Yearning, straining, from the prison
  Of confining flesh to burst;
Here the soul an exile sighs
For her native Paradise.

Weigh'd beneath a thousand evils,
  From without and from within,
Oft she muses on her glory
  Forfeited in Adam's sin;
And the past more bright appears
Through the mist of present tears.

Who can paint that lovely city,
  City of true peace divine,
Whose pure gates, for ever open,
  Each in pearly splendour shine;
All her streets empav'd with gold,
Clear as topaz to behold?

Whose foundations deep-descending
  Are of living jasper made;

All her walls and royal towers
With celestial gems inlaid;
Whose abodes of glory clear
Naught defiling cometh near.

There no stormy winter rages;
There no scorching summer glows;
But through one perennial springtide,
Blooms the lily with the rose;
Bloom the myrrh and balsam sweet,
With the fadeless violet.

There a Paradisal perfume
Breathes upon the air serene;
There crystalline waters flowing
Keep the grass for ever green;
And the golden orchards show
Fruits that ne'er corruption know.

There no sun his circuit wheeleth;
There no moon or stars appear;
Thither night and darkness come not;
Death has no dominion there;
In its stead, the Lamb's pure ray
Scatters round eternal day.

There the Saints of God, resplendent
As the sun in all his might,

Evermore rejoice together,
Crown'd with diadems of light;
And from peril safe at last,
Reckon up their triumphs past.

Purg'd from every least defilement
That was grief to them before;
Flesh and spirit now agreeing
And at enmity no more;—
Peace is theirs without alloy,
Peace and plenitude of joy.

From a changeful world remounting
To the source from whence they came,
Theirs it is to see undazzled
Truth through endless years the same;
And in life's eternal river
Satisfy their hearts for ever.

O, how blest! who own a being
Which of no disturbance knows:
Who from glory's central fountain
Drink ineffable repose;
Roseate youth, that never fades;
Health, which no disease invades!

O, how blest! to whom for ever
Passing things are pass'd away;
Who in sprightly vigour blooming,
Live impassive to decay;

Subject now no more to die,
Clothed with immortality!

Knowing Him who knoweth all things,
Naught to them remains unknown;
Each the bosom of the other
Scans as though it were his own;
All their wills and thoughts agree,
Link'd in perfect unity!

Differing as below in merits,
So in glory now above;
Each the graces of the other
Makes his own by mutual love;
And the bliss of every breast
Swells the joy of all the rest.

Where the Saviour's victim Body
Sits aloft in glorious state,
Thither, like the crowding eagles,
Countlessly they congregate;
And with Angels share the Food
That unites the soul with God.

There they eat the Bread of Heaven!
There they drink of life their fill!
There insatiate ever feasting,
Feel a thirst and hunger still;
Hunger, which itself is sweet;
Thirst, with endless joys replete!

There in strains harmonious blending,
They their dulcet anthems sing;
And, on harps divinely thrilling,
Glorify their glorious King;
Aided by whose arm of might,
They were victors in the fight.

While, below, its mazes threading,
Far in distant space they see
All the fabric of creation
In its vast immensity,—
Sun and moon and planets clear,
With the starry hemisphere.

Happy he, who with them seated
Doth in all their glory share!
O that I, my days completed,
Might be but admitted there!
There with them the praise to sing
Of my beauteous God and King.

Look, O Jesu! on Thy soldier,
Worn and wounded in the fight;
Grant, O grant him, rest for ever
In Thy beatific sight;
And Thyself his guerdon be
Through a long eternity.

XXXVIII.

THE BAPTISMAL FONT.

Hic reparandarum generator fons animarum.

Ever sparkling, ever mounting,
In a jet of rainbow hue!
Here, in Light's o'erflowing fountain,
Souls are daily born anew.

Here, the Holy Ghost descending
Weds the waters of the earth,
With the stream of Life unending,
Which in Paradise had birth:

While in turn, the wave receiving
His prolific grace benign,
From th' eternal Source conceiving,
Bears an offspring all divine.

O, beneficence surprising!—
Merg'd a moment in the tide,
See the sinner thence arising
In a moment justified!

So to guilt divinely dying,
Man to Heav'n revives again;
And on earth no more relying,
Learns to count its glory vain.

So by this baptismal portal,
While our ancient Adam dies,
Forth we come to life immortal,
And a kingdom in the skies!

Honour, blessing, glory, merit,
To the Father and the Son;
With the sempiternal Spirit,
One in Trine, and Trinal One.

XXXIX.

CHARGE OF THE GREAT HIGH-PRIEST, JESUS CHRIST, TO PRIESTS AND CLERICS.

Piscatores hominum, sacerdotes mei.

Ye Fishers of mankind! ye Lights ordain'd below
With Faith and Hope and Love unceasingly to glow!
Ye Preachers of the truth! ye Priesthood of My choice!
Incline your ear awhile, and listen to My voice.

Consider how ye stand apart from all the rest,
To minister within My Sanctuary blest;
And O, let not your lives unprofitable be,
If ye expect to dwell eternally with Me!

'Tis yours the Christian Law in vigour to uphold;
Ye are the Salt of earth, the Shepherds of the fold;
The Walls of Israel's house, the Leaders of the blind;
The Watchmen of the Church, the Lamps of human kind.

If its Protectors fail, how can the law endure?
If its own Shepherd sleep, what fold can be secure?
If Salt its savour lose, how shall it salted be?
And if the Lamp be hid, who then his way shall see?

My vineyard is your charge: take heed ye never fail
With rills of doctrine pure to keep it water'd well;
Take heed that ye the weeds with diligence uproot,
That so the germs of faith may freely bud and shoot.

My sacred Oxen ye, who on My threshing-floor
Tread out the grain that I have garner'd for the poor;
My Mirror ye, in which the ignorant and weak
Their law and daily rule of life and conduct seek.

Whate'er the people see that your own lives condemn,
The same they will esteem unlawful too to them;
Whatever they behold allow'd yourselves by you,
The same they will esteem that they may also do.

Have I not chosen you as Shepherds of My sheep?
Beware, then, lest ye be as dogs that love to sleep;
That, sunk in lazy sloth, no voice of warning sound,
When, envious of the flock, the wolf is prowling round.

Three foods there are on which My faithful people live:
The first, My sacred Flesh, which unto them I give;
The second, earthly meats, that nature's waste supply;
The third, the word of grace and immortality.

This word divine 'tis yours to all men to declare;
But how, in what degree, and at what time, and where,
It needeth careful thought, if that ye would not err,
And in your sacred work the risk of blame incur.

This of your office high moreover I require,—
Freely My gifts to give to all who them desire;
Freely, without reward; lest with Giezi ye,
Sharing his guilt, share too his shameful leprosy.

Freely I would that ye impart the Bread of Heaven,
E'en as to you and all most freely it was given;
Freely that ye absolve; freely that ye baptise,
If ye would bring yourselves and flock to Paradise.

Religious be your life, your conscience pure and clean;
Your soul with graces fill'd, your countenance serene;
Your manners sweet and mild, your habits order'd well;
Your conduct free from stain and irreproachable.

Beware of pride, that seeks to rise above its state;
Sober be your attire, grave and compos'd your gait;

And let not any cause in vile employs ensnare
Those hands, which of the Keys of Heaven have the care.

Your words, I would that they should brief and sparing be,—
Loquacity is but the nurse of vanity;
Much talk engenders sin; and every word ye say
Must give its own account upon the Judgment-Day.

In fine, be just and true,—be hospitable, kind,
Chaste, holy, prudent, meek, to sympathy inclin'd,—
Correctors of the bad, the fathers of the poor,—
And never turn away the wretched from your door.

Which if ye well observe, and live in truth and deed
A spiritual life, how great shall be your meed!
When, of this flesh uncloth'd, ye shall My glory see,
And in the stole be rob'd of immortality!

XL.

PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS.

O Deus, ego amo te.

I LOVE, I love Thee, Lord most high!
Because Thou first hast lovèd me;
I seek no other liberty
But that of being bound to Thee.

May memory no thought suggest,
But shall to Thy pure glory tend;
My understanding find no rest
Except in Thee, its only end.

My God, I here protest to Thee,
No other will have I than Thine;
Whatever Thou hast given me,
I here again to Thee resign.

All mine is Thine,—say but the word,
Whate'er Thou willest shall be done;
I know Thy love, all-gracious Lord;
I know it seeks my good alone.

Apart from Thee all things are naught;
Then grant, O my supremest bliss!
Grant me to love Thee as I ought;—
Thou givest all in giving this!

XLI.

HYMN OF THOMAS À KEMPIS, ON CHRISTIAN PATIENCE.

Adversa mundi tolera.

For Christ's dear sake with courage bear
Whatever ills betide;
Prosperity is oft a snare,
And puffs the heart with pride.

What seem'd thy loss, will often prove
To be thy truest gain;
And sufferings borne with patient love
A jewell'd crown obtain.

By this thou wilt the angels please,
Wilt glorify the Lord,
Thy neighbour's faith and hope increase,
And earn a rich reward.

Brief is this life, and brief its pain,
But long the bliss to come;
Trials endur'd for Christ attain
A place with martyrdom.

The Christian soul by patience grows
More perfect day by day;
And brighter still, and brighter glows
With Heav'n's eternal ray;

To Christ becomes more lovable,
More like the Saints on high;
Dear to the good; invincible
Against the Enemy.

XLII.

THE DAY OF DEATH.

Gravi me terrore pulsus.

Day of death! in silence speeding
On the wings of darkness near!
How my inmost nature trembles,
Melting with excess of fear!
When, in sleepless thought reclin'd,
I depict thee to my mind.

Vainly strives imagination
That dread moment to portray;
When the soul, her course completed,
Soon to quit her home of clay,
Fiercely wrestles, might and main,
With her yielding fleshly chain.

When the rigid eyeballs darken;
When the torpid senses fail;
When the tongue its task refuses;
When the face, all wan and pale,
Members numb, and panting breath,
Tell of quick-approaching death.

While reviv'd from deep oblivion,
Thoughts and words, a mingled maze,

Long forgotten deeds, unnumber'd,
Crowd before the spirit's gaze;
Turn whichever way she will,
Ever there abiding still!

Oh, how then the guilty spirit
Shall her wasted years deplore!
Shall bewail salvation's season
Idly lost for evermore!
How supreme shall be her pain,
To have liv'd her life in vain!

Oh, how bitter then the sweetness
Of deluding flesh shall seem!
What a phantom, human greatness,
All dissolving like a dream!
What a mockery, pleasures brief,
Follow'd by eternal grief!

While the soul, her worth perceiving,
Which before she never weigh'd,
Spurns the filth in which so lately
She was lying, self-betray'd;
And, at any risk, would be
From her carnal bondage free.

King immortal! I beseech Thee
By Thy Cross of bitter woe;

Jesu Christ! at my departure
Thy sustaining grace bestow;
Oh, in me at that dread hour,
Crush the tyrant-tempter's power.

Scatter all his host infernal;
Lay me fast in Thee asleep;
Then to fields of life eternal
Bear me, Shepherd of the sheep!
There to bask in sight of Thee,
Safe for all futurity!

XLIII.

CANTICLE OF ST. TERESA, AFTER COMMUNION.

Vivo sin vivir en mi.

TEXT.

I LIVE, BUT FROM MYSELF AM FAR AWAY;
AND HOPE TO REACH A LIFE SO HIGH,
THAT I'M FOR EVER DYING BECAUSE I DO NOT DIE!

GLOSS.

I.

THIS union of divinest love,
By which I live a life above,
Setting my heart at liberty,
My God to me enchains;

But then to see His majesty
In such a base captivity!
It so my spirit pains;
That evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

II.

Ah, what a length does life appear!
How hard to bear this exile here!
How hard, from weary day to day,
To pine without relief!
The yearning hope to break away,
From this my prison-house of clay,
Inspires so sharp a grief;
That evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

III.

Oh, what a bitter life is this,
Depriv'd of God, its only bliss!
And what though love delicious be,
Not so is hope deferr'd;
Ah, then, dear Lord, in charity,
This iron weight of misery
From my poor soul ungird;
For evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

IV.

This only gives me life and strength
To know that die I must at length!
For hope insures me bliss divine
  Through death, and death alone;
O Death! for thee, for thee I pine;
Sweet Death! of life the origin!
  Ah, wing thee hither soon;
For evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

V.

And thou, fond Life, O, vex me not,
By still prolonging here my lot;
But know that love is urging me;
  Know that the only way
To gain thee, is—by losing thee!
Come, then, O Death! come speedily,
  And end thy long delay;
For evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

VI.

The life above, the life on high,
Alone is life in verity;
Nor can we life at all enjoy,
  Till this poor life is o'er;

Then, O sweet Death! no longer fly
From me, who, ere my time to die,
  Am dying evermore;
For evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

VII.

To Him who deigns in me to live,
What better gift have I to give,
O my poor earthly life, than thee?
  Too glad of thy decay;
So but I may the sooner see
That face of sweetest majesty,
  For which I pine away;
While evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

VIII.

Absent from Thee, my Saviour dear!
I call not life this living here;
But a long dying agony,
  The sharpest I have known;
And I myself, myself to see
In such a rack of misery,
  For very pity moan;
And ever, ever weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

IX.

The fish that from the brook is ta'en,
Soon finds an end of all its pain;
And agonies the worst to bear,
  Are soonest spent and o'er;
But what acutest death can e'er
With this my painful life compare,
  In torture evermore?
While evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

X.

When in the Sacred Host I see,
My God, Thy hidden majesty,
And peace begins to soothe my heart,—
  Then comes redoubled pain,
To think, that here from Thee apart,
I cannot see Thee as Thou art,
  But gaze, and gaze in vain;
While evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

XI.

When with the hope I comfort me,
At least in Heav'n of seeing Thee,
The thought that I may lose Thee yet
  With anguish thrills me through;

And by a thousand fears beset,
My very hope inspires regret,
  And multiplies my woe;
While evermore I weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

XII.

Ah, Lord! my light and living breath!
Take me, O take me, from this death,
And burst the bars that sever me
  From my true life above;
Think, how I die Thy face to see,
And cannot live away from Thee,
  O my eternal Love!
And ever, ever weep and sigh,
Dying because I do not die.

XIII.

I weary of this endless strife,
I weary of this dying life—
This living death—this heavy chain—
  This torment of delay,
In which her sins my soul detain;
Ah, when shall it be mine?—Ah, when
  With my last breath to say,
"No more I weep, no more I sigh,
I'm dying of desire to die?"

PRAYER.

O Jesu, who Teresa's beauteous soul
With Thy love-dart didst fire,
Deep in my heart of hearts,
Her own sweet longing love of Thee inspire.

XLIV.

HOLY RELICS.

Adeste, Sancti, plurimo.

Now, while before your relics
Our prayers and incense rise,
Look down, ye Saints of Heaven!
And help us from the skies.

What though in dismal ruin
Your bones so long have lain,
Yet still sublimest virtues
E'en in their dust remain:

Still in these holy temples
The Spirit makes His home;
Reserving them for glory
In ages yet to come:

Whence from beneath the altar
They yet exert their might,

Subduing death and sickness,
And putting Hell to flight.

O Christ, our Judge immortal,
Through all the worlds, to Thee
All glory with the Father
And Holy Spirit be.

XLV.

FUNERAL HYMN.

Jam mœsta quiesce querela.

Cease, ye tearful mourners!
Thus your hearts to rend;
Death is life's beginning,
Rather than its end.

All the grave's adornments,—
What do they declare,
Save that the departed
Are but sleeping there?

What though now to darkness
We this body give;
Soon shall all its senses
Re-awake, and live;

Soon shall warmth revisit
  These poor bones again;
And the blood meander
  Through each tingling vein;

And from its corruption
  This same body soar,
With the selfsame spirit
  That was here of yore.

E'en as duly scatter'd
  By the sower's hand,
In the fading Autumn
  O'er the fallow land,

Nature's seed decaying,
  First in darkness dies;
Ere it can in glory
  Renovated rise.

Earth, to thy fond bosom
  We this pledge intrust;
Oh! we pray, be careful
  Of the precious dust.

This was once the mansion
  Of a soul endow'd
With sublimest powers,
  By the breath of God.

Here eternal Wisdom
Lately made His home;
And again will claim it,
In the days to come;

When thou must this body,
Bone for bone, restore;
Every single feature
Perfect as before.

O, divinest Period!
Speed upon thy way;
O, eternal Justice!
Make no more delay.

When shall love in glory
Its fruition see?
When shall hope be lost
In immortality?

XLVI.

HYMN OF INTERCESSION FOR THE DEAD.

O vos fideles animæ.

Ye Souls of the faithful!
Who sleep in the Lord!
But as yet are shut out
From your final reward!

Oh! would I could lend you
  Assistance to fly,
From your prison below,
  To your palace on high!

O Father of mercies!
  Thine anger withhold;
These works of Thy hand
  In Thy mercy behold;
Too oft from Thy path
  They have wander'd aside;
But Thee, their Creator,
  They never denied.

O tender Redeemer!
  Their misery see;
Deliver the souls
  That were ransom'd by Thee;
Behold how they love Thee,
  Despite of their pain;
Restore them, restore them
  To favour again.

O Spirit of grace!
  O Consoler divine!
See how for Thy presence
  They longingly pine;
Ah, then, to enliven
  Their sadness, descend;

And fill them with peace,
And with joy in the end.

O Mother of mercy!
Dear Soother in grief!
Lend thou to their torments
A balmy relief;
Attemper the rigour
Of justice severe;
And soften their flames
With a pitying tear.

Ye Patrons! who watch'd
O'er their safety below;
Oh! think how they need
Your fidelity now;
And stir all the Angels
And Saints of the sky,
To plead for the souls
That upon you rely.

Ye Friends! who, once sharing
Their pleasure and pain,
Now haply already
In Paradise reign!
Oh! comfort their hearts
With a whisper of love;
And call them to share
In your pleasures above.

O Fountain of goodness!
Accept our sighs;
Let thy mercy bestow
What thy justice denies;
So may thy poor captives,
Releas'd from their woes,
Thy praises proclaim
While eternity flows.

All ye, who would honour
The Saints and their Head,
Remember, remember,
To pray for the dead;
And they, in return,
From their misery freed,
To you will be friends
In the hour of need.

XLVII.

MIDNIGHT.

Mediæ noctis tempus est.

'Tis the solemn midnight hour;—
With the Psalmist let us sing,
To the Lord of grace and power,
Heav'n and earth's triunal King;

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One in Substance evermore,
Whom the bright Angelic host,
Bent in prostrate awe, adore.

'Twas at this same hour of old,
Smit by the Destroyer's breath,
Egypt's first-born sons grew cold,
In the sudden sleep of death.

This same hour on Israel's race
Pour'd salvation from on high;
When before the sign of grace,
Harmless pass'd the Avenger by.

Whence to all the sons of light,
Still it tells of peace and rest;
Breeding sadness and affright
Only in the sinner's breast.

Lord, thine Israel true are we;
Thou our confidence and aid;
Foes of every foe of Thee,
Who shall make our heart afraid?

This again is that same hour,
As in holy writ we learn,
When the Bridegroom, girt with power,
In His glory shall return.

Whom to meet, the Virgins wise
Bearing lamps of purest light,
Joy and gladness in their eyes,
Forth shall go in snowy white.

While the foolish, all in vain
Knocking at the heavenly door,
Must in outer night remain,
There to weep for evermore.

Ah! then, let us watch and pray;
So that, ever on our guard,
Come the Lord whene'er He may,
He may find us well prepar'd.

At the midnight hour again,
Singing to the Lord aloud,
Paul and Silas felt their chain
Melt before the might of God.

Lord! from earth, our prison-house,
Unto Thee we lift our prayer;
Loose the sins that fetter us,
And Thy true Believers spare.

Make us worthy, glorious King,
Of Thy Kingdom and of Thee;
So may we Thy glories sing
Through a blest Eternity!

XLVIII.

THE PRAISES OF JESUS.

Gelobt sey Jesus Christ.

When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awaking cries;
May Jesus Christ be praised.

Alike at work and prayer,
To Jesus I repair;
May, &c.

The sacred minster bell,
It peals o'er hill and dell;
May, &c.

Oh! hark to what it sings,
As joyously it rings;
May, &c.

To Thee, my God above,
I cry with glowing love;
May, &c.

The fairest graces spring
In hearts that ever sing,
May, &c.

My tongue shall never tire
Of chanting in the choir,
May, &c.

This song of sacred joy,
It never seems to cloy;
May, &c.

When sleep her balm denies,
My silent spirit sighs;
May, &c.

When evil thoughts molest,
With this I shield my breast;
May, &c.

Does sadness fill my mind?
A solace here I find;
May, &c.

Or fades my earthly bliss?
My comfort still is this;
May, &c.

Though burst my heart in twain,
Still this shall be my strain;
May, &c.

When you begin the day,
Oh! never fail to say;
May, &c.

And at your work rejoice,
To sing with heart and voice;
May, &c.

Be this at meals your grace,
In every time and place;
May, &c.

Be this, when day is past,
Of all your thoughts the last;
May, &c.

In want and bitter pain,
None ever said in vain;
May, &c.

Should guilt your spirit wring,
Remember Christ, your King;
May, &c.

The night becomes as day,
When from the heart we say;
May, &c.

In Heav'n's eternal bliss,
The loveliest strain is this;
May, &c.

The powers of darkness fear,
When this sweet chant they hear;
May, &c.

To God the Word on high,
The hosts of Angels cry;
May, &c.

Let mortals, too, upraise
Their voice in hymns of praise;
May, &c.

Let earth's wide circle round,
In joyful notes resound;
May, &c.

Let air, and sea, and sky,
From depth to height reply;
May, &c.

Be this while life is mine,
My canticle divine;
May, &c.

Be this th' eternal Song,
Through all the ages on;
May, &c.

XLIX.

AN EVENING HYMN.

Sol præceps rapitur, proxima nox adest.

THE sun is sinking fast;
The daylight dies;
Let love awake and pay
Her evening sacrifice.

As Christ upon the Cross
In death reclin'd,
Into His Father's hands
His parting soul resign'd;

So now herself my soul
Would wholly give,
Into His sacred charge,
In whom all spirits live:

So now beneath His eye
Would calmly rest,
Without a wish or thought
Abiding in the breast,

Save that His will be done;
Whate'er betide;
Dead to herself; and dead
In Him, to all beside.

Thus would I live;—yet now
Not I, but He;
In all His power and love
Henceforth alive in me!

One sacred Trinity!
One Lord divine!
Myself for ever His!
And He for ever mine!

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